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closely paralleling that of their Hindu neighbors. On the other hand, their social organization is relatively lacking in the cleavages of caste which are so prevalent all about them. Apart from the village, which is usually composed of a number of patrilineal kin-groups, territorial organization is weakly developed, and the tribe as a whole has never been politically unified so far as historical records indicate.

Even as a unique people the Santal merit special attention. Numbering today over three million, the region they occupy contains the richest deposits of iron, coal and other crucial industrial minerals in all of India. The chief source of their livelihood, at least since the nineteenth century, has been settled agriculture. Prior to the nineteenth century, hunting was also an important livelihood activity, but the great increase in the region's population and subsequent reduction of forest areas has made game extremely scarce; it is now difficult for the inhabitants even to obtain materials for fuel and building purposes. Though the chief source of food and cash is the annual rice crop, a few vegetables are also grown and some fruit trees maintained. Some villages are near enough to a river for fish to be readily obtained, while some villages stock their local ponds. Even prior to the introduction of modern industry in the region, the Santal had ceased to be economically independent. Although they once did some pottery making, weaving, and even iron smelting, they have come to rely almost exclusively on various local Hindu castes for these material products. Women from several low Hindu castes are used frequently as midwives. While almost no Santal are ritually served by Brahmin priests, itinerant Hindu holy men (*sadhu*) visit many Santal villages, consulting horoscopes and offering prayers for a fee or donation.

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to

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171 Mundari tribes of the region, for the tribes are thereby bound to one another and set apart from the surrounding Hindu society.

Of course, there are many other distinctive practices which have contributed to external solidarity, two of the more important among them being the language spoken and the deities worshiped. But the Hindus have demonstrated such a genius for incorporating alien cultures and societies that one cannot satisfactorily account for the maintenance of distinctiveness of the Santal and some other closely related tribes of the region on the basis of contrasting likenesses. To begin to understand the preservation of these societies it is necessary to shift to an historical perspective of the social relations between the tribal societies of the region and the increasingly dominant Hindu society.

[177]

177
563 All about the Santal are examples of formerly Mundari-speaking tribals who have become Hindus. Most conspicuous to the Santal are the Bhumij, numbering over a hundred thousand and living interspersed throughout the territory of the southern Santal. Still bearing Mundari clan names, and some few still speaking a dialect of Mundari, most are nevertheless socially Hindus. According to Sinha, who has done extensive field work among these people, the Bhumij in most regions regard themselves and are regarded by others as Hindus; this is supported by my own observations (Sinha 1956). Like other low castes, they are not often rigorously assigned a particular level in the caste hierarchy, but they do enter into active economic relations with the various Hindu castes of the region. Unlike the Santal, many regard the employment of such Hindu castes as Brahmans, barbers, and washermen as essential, and

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177 563 most speak only the regionally prevailing Indian language, i.e., Bengali, Hindi, or Oriya.[1]

177 563 171 One hears of a Bhumij chief of Barabhum who claimed to be a Rājput Kṣatriya and employed degraded Brahmans. In Manbhum thirty years ago there was a Bhumij Kṣatriya who was a large landlord and who protested against his enumeration in the census as a *Bannya Jai* (Hindi = "wild tribe"); he claimed that his rituals conformed with high-caste Hindu standards. He and his retainers who were served by Brahmans and by members of other Hindu castes regarded themselves as superior to the "unclean" artisan and servant castes but inferior to the priestly Brahman and Boishtom castes. Apparently, there is considerable confusion among the "other" Hindu castes as to the rank of this group of Bhumij. Only twenty years ago the women of these Bhumij joined in public mixed dancing and the men still sacrificed chicken at their Sarhul festival. Nevertheless their Pargana was becoming endogamous and their clans had ceased to be exogamous.

Though Hinduization is general among the Bhumij and other tribals in the area, there is a tendency for those tribals who hold traditional offices and/or those who are wealthy to be more acculturated and assimilated than others.

In some regions occupational specialization has occurred, e.g., the Shelo Bhumij of Dhalbhum who are iron smelters and smithies, and the Shelo Kamar of Manbhum, who are blacksmiths and no longer regard themselves as Bhumij.[2] But the Bhumij are not the only tribe so affected, nor is the process of Hinduization confined to this or even simply the last century.

[1] Sinha *ibid.*
[2] Sinha *ibid.*

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177 563 171 As early as the sixteenth century a Munda tribal in the Ranchi district established himself as a local Rājā.[3] By virtue of his wealth and power he attracted reputable Brahmans to his court who Sanskritized his rituals and manufactured for him a Rājput genealogy. Eventually this status was accepted by other Rājputs and marriage ties were established.

177 563 There are numerous other examples, and the Santal themselves have undergone considerable Hindu acculturation and some fission and Hindu assimilation though not nearly to the same degree or in such large numbers as the Bhumij. Hindu-tribal contact in the region has been long and intense. All the tribes in the area have been heavily influenced by Hindu culture, some have been partially and others totally absorbed in the Hindu social order and no doubt many Hindu castes have been so recruited in instances where the historical record is unknown. Why the Bhumij have been assimilated and the Santal, Munda, Ho, and some others have not must be understood by reference to particular historical differences which are beyond the scope of this investigation. However, the examination of Santal historical experience does shed light on the general conditions which are relevant to assimilation as well as on the specific historical events which were crucial to the Santal experience.

175 648 669 Perhaps the single most important event in the history of Santal-Hindu relations was the Santal rebellion of 1855–57. This major public event, which first drew the serious attention of India's English rulers to the Santal, reveals at once the nature of Santal-Hindu relations and the strengths and limitations of Santal solidarity. Commemorated in Santal songs and

[3] Roy 1912.

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ally forced to flee the areas where they settled. "As soon as we have cleared the jungle in any country, the Deko come and rob us of it. Still if the Sahabs nowadays did not help them, we should soon drive them to the other side of the Ganges."[14]

A myth concerned with the days before the rebellion refers to the differential emulation of the rich and powerful which has been previously mentioned. It describes the Santal as fleeing from a place called Champa to Saont, where their Rājās adopted Hindu religious practices and set themselves up as Rājputs, intermarrying with a local Rājput family. But according to mythology the people would not follow their converted Rājā and therefore fled to Santal Parganas. Another version of the myth tells of the daughter of a Kisku king who had intercourse with someone of another tribe. The illegitimate child of this union grew up to become the chief advisor of the Kisku king, who sought to arrange a Santal marriage; the Santal people refused, and the king, in anger, threatened to defile all of their daughters by forcibly applying vermilion to their upper forehead and in the central part of their hair—a still acceptable way of obtaining a wife by capture. Rather than submit to such a marriage most of the Santal fled Champa.[15] Thus Santal mythology defends solidarity in the face of the emulation and Hindu social claims of some of its leaders.

Nevertheless, the defeat of the Santal rebellion of 1855–57 appears to have led to increased Hinduization, perhaps in part because the path to higher rank through military force seemed closed. Soon after the rebellion the Kherwar movement developed among the northern Santal. Those who joined this Hindu-

[14] Bodding 1942:10.
[15] Bodding *ibid.*

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177 795 ized sect adopted a number of critical Hindu symbols of rank, such as wearing the sacred thread. They were said to "regard themselves as socially superior to those who do not wear *suta* (Hindi = sacred thread). The "*janeo dhari* Santal [those who wear the sacred thread] are reluctant to intermarry or have social intercourse with the non-*janeo dhari* Santal."[16] This sect also adjured meat-eating. A prime motivation for the sect's adoption of such practices must have been to attain higher rank.

175 648 Both schisms and solidarity in the period shortly after the rebellion are described by Dalton:

> Santals who are under the example and precept of Bengali Hindus have abjured some practices considered impure by the latter and are called Sat Santal, that is, pure Santal; but there is a national antagonism between them [the Santal] and the Hindus that prevents any close fraternization or communion between the races. They are not over particular about food, but nothing will induce them to eat rice cooked by a Hindu, even a Brahman. Unfortunately, during the famine of 1866 this was not known to us. The cooks who prepared the food distributed at the relief center were all Brahmans and it was supposed that this would suit all classes, but the Santals kept aloof and died rather than eat from the hands so hateful to them.[17]

Dalton has somewhat overdrawn the reluctance of the Santal to fraternize with Hindus, but the event he describes and the tenor of his remarks regarding the hatred and fear that the Santal have of Hindu conform with all other reports.

648 186 The simultaneous attraction and resistance to the Hindu world appears in the remarks of a sophisticated northern Santal

[16] Majumder 1956:62.
[17] Dalton 1872:214

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who in 1871 spoke in words almost identical to those one often hears today among the Santal; he says, "We only watch at Hindu festivals [we should only watch]; but as these festivals do not belong to us, Santal do not act rightly [in] offering to the *boṅga* (deities) of other races. On account of this our *boṅgas* are angry with us; it becomes like the state of having a wife and a co-wife, we are not making anybody satisfied."[18] Regarding specific borrowings from the Hindus, this same Santal says, "From the *Dekos* we have from time to time taken over many festivals; but among these there is only one festival that the whole village celebrates, viz., the Karam." He explains that on this occasion the offerings include certain flowers, sun-dried paddy, a type of grass, oil, and vermilion, i.e., the offerings are typically Hindu. They are presented to the Hindu deities Karmu and Dharmu.

> At other festivals taken from the *Dekos*, only the man who celebrates it, worships, and we go to look at it; we do not worship. At the Durga festival such people offer to Durga, at the Kali festival they offer to Kali, at the Monsa festival they offer to Monsa, at the Chata festival they offer to the Chata boṅga, at the Pata festival they offer to Mahadeb and at the Jatra festival they offer to Ransig, the Jatra boṅga.[19]

Though the Karam festival was certainly taken from the Hindus, it is not the only Hindu ceremony which the Santal communally celebrate. Various other ceremonies practiced in the nineteenth century and today are similar to Hindu cere-

[18] Bodding, 1942:158.
[19] Bodding *ibid.*:158.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 796 monies celebrated at approximately the same time, e.g., Sakrat (Hindi: Sankranti), and Dāsẽ (Hindi: Dasserah). However, these ceremonies are celebrated with a number of distinctive Santal practices, including animal sacrifice, worship at the Sacred Grove of Santal deities, etc.

177 178 648 The pattern of Santal-Hindu relations is thus one of Hindu domination and exploitation combined with considerable cultural influence. In the nineteenth century the Santal responded to increased Hindu pressure with a number of revolts which ended in defeat. These defeats must have indicated to the Santal that their position could not be improved by armed force nor by any other political means. Following these defeats acculturation and assimilation increased. At the same time there were attempts to curtail emulation of Hinduism and to combat assimilation, indicating the existence of counter-forces favoring solidarity. The advent of the market, population pressure, and increasing wealth differences among the Santal which developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century significantly affected the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

The Advent of the Market

177 361 648 311 The spread of the market, British Indian law and British protection led to a greater influx of Hindus into the hitherto sparsely populated Chotanagpur plateau. This Hindu influx plus the general growth of population, both Hindu and tribal, rapidly reduced the amount of unexploited land. The Santal record is full of examples of hiving off and forming new villages, new local lineages, and, no doubt, new sub-clans. The *bustee* of Daredih itself, which is now filled with industrial

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workers, was founded as an ordinary agricultural village not more than about sixty years ago. But such opportunities decreased throughout the nineteenth and this century. One inevitable result was to increase wealth differences and to make them more permanent.

A major consequence of increased wealth differences has been the strain placed on internal solidarity by "envy" (*hisạ*; Hindi: *hinsḳa*) and even more by fear of "envy." What this term conveys is concealed malicious intent based upon desire for what another possesses. Though Santal society has long been plagued with accusations of witchcraft, the notion that its practice is almost invariably deliberate and that it arises from envy is of modern origin. Though it is recognized that men may be "envious," it is thought that females most often are guilty and that it is only they who practice witchcraft. Fertile grounds for envy, and attendant witchcraft, appeared when wealthy Santal began using their capital to hire other Santal, to loan money, paddy, and seed at interest, to buy forest land, and even in a few cases to invest in various small-scale enterprises. Relations arising from these investments are often strained and a source of resentment. Envy also arises from observation of what wealth procures in terms of traditional Santal pleasures and from its use in settling disputes.

Aside from the exacerbation of "envy," which increased wealth differences produced, the market imposed other, more general strains. It is difficult to square the basic reciprocity of relations in a kin society like that of the Santal with the impersonal and contractual relations of the market. Though the Santal struggle over land with as much ferocity as any peasants, they find it hard to insist on strictly market relations with other commodities, especially if pressed by kinsmen. A few Santal

Nonetheless, elite Santal were somewhat more Hinduized
177 than their poorer fellows. Some managed to attract a coterie
556 of high-caste but often impoverished Hindus. One hears of wealthy Santal who spent considerable sums on such associates during trips to and attendance at Hindu festivals. Some who
177 were village headmen or Parganaths (multi-village headmen)
556 established enduring relations with the Mahārājā or local
622 zemindar of their region. These Santal often were given respon-
648 sibility for tax collection, in return for which they kept a portion and received grants of land.

177 The Santal have long followed the practice of establishing
608 among themselves, and with other castes, permanent bonds of
648 a kinship type, which are given public recognition in a "flower" (*phul*; Santali and Hindi =flower) ceremony. In some instances an elite family managed to establish such a tie with a Brahman family while ordinary Santal contracted such relations only with other tribals or Hindus of very low caste. *This contrib-*
[192] *uted to differential emulation of Hindu practices.* Some of the
[583] traditional elite among the southern Santal abandoned beef-eating and cow sacrifice; some affected the dress of high-caste Hindus; a few demanded an end to "capture marriage" (*itut' bapla*) because they did not wish to have close relations with unwealthy families of low status. Though their success in getting the non-elite to follow their Hinduized practices was limited, a certain degree of culture difference was established, to the detriment of solidarity.

177 However, as the historical evidence indicates and as any contemporary observer could infer, contact with Hindu society has been long and/or intensive, and that portion of Santal culture shared by all Santal is so marked with Hindu traits that it
[755] would be a monumental task to indicate all of them. All Santal call on neighboring Hindus of low caste to deliver babies.

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177 439 [286] [323] [534] Although the Santal used to do some weaving and pottery-making, they have traditionally obtained almost everything except foodstuffs and a few forest products from neighboring tribal or Hindu peoples. Even the drums and the flutes which are so integrated in the "pleasure" complex are invariably purchased from Hindu specialists. Furthermore, elite borrowings have often become "naturalized," i.e., accepted as Santal and then widely adopted so as to close the gap. Nevertheless, emulation of Hindus did not always go unnoticed and it will be recalled that there is evidence of resistance to such Hinduization.

177 197 [601] [614] [538] The many Hindu cognates in this text give some indication of the extent of linguistic borrowing. Only a few Santal kin terms are of non-Indo-European origin, and the system of dyadic relations among kin is very much like that of the Hindus; one of the largest clans, Hansdak', has a name clearly of Indo-European origin (*hans* = duck in Santali and Hindi), but one also notes the syncretism with the non-Indo-European (*dak'* = water in Santali). Even parts of the Rāmāyaṇa are sung in Santali and on occasion the Santal are allowed to enter the tale. Considering the prevalence of "parochialization" and "universalization" in India,[38] it is possible that some of what is common to the two cultures is of Santal origin. But the heavy incorporation of vocabulary clearly of Indo-European origin suggests that the flow was largely from the Hindus to the Santal.

177 178 184 Prior to industrial employment in this century a small cultural gap separated the elite and common Santal. Though there was some differential emulation of Hinduism it was largely of isolated traits which often became naturalized, and the basic "pleasure" orientation of the Santal was hardly altered.

[38] Marriott 1955:211.

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Chapter 3 The Rise of Education

177 178 464 The advent of the market and the failure of the Santal rebellions to achieve significant political power led to a decrease in Santal solidarity and thereby contributed to an increase in acculturation and assimilation. This effect, however, was limited so long as there was no major industrial development. But with the rise of Jamshedpur and its associated industry and educational establishments, Santal solidarity seriously declined. A critical factor in this process has been the severance of the Santal from the web of traditional social relationships resulting from migration to industrial employment.

177 327 871 In 1900 almost no southern Santal were literate and perhaps none had received any formal education. By 1957 the situation was markedly changed, and the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) at Jamshedpur has been the primary source of that change. TISCO has built the schools and motivated the Santal to attend them.

Two of the three colleges within the area occupied by the southern Santal were established by TISCO, one in Jamshedpur and one in Chaibasa, a town in Singhbhum. While the number

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of schools of all levels has increased throughout this area, Jamshedpur has probably as many high schools as all of Mayurbhanj District. TISCO has also provided a trade apprentice school, and enough elementary schools so that I heard of no instance in which a child missed schooling because of lack of facilities.

The effect on motivation is perhaps even more significant since the Santal throughout the area are affected by it, whatever educational opportunities prevail. Until the mid-1940's, when certain new political positions became available, the industrial town of Jamshedpur was virtually the only place at which an educated Santal might gain some return proportional to his educational investment. The entire structure of positions and salaries in Jamshedpur's industries, particularly in the relatively highly rationalized TISCO, makes it clear, even to the most unsophisticated, that it is educational attainment which is rewarded. Though the Santal chiefly occupy the lower echelons of factory employment, the literacy figures that I obtained comparing villagers, *bustee* dwellers, and city Santal support the conclusion that Jamshedpur is both motivation and lure for the educated Santal.

LITERACY RATE AMONG ADULT MALES

Village	20%
Bustee	42%
City	88%

Because of the limitations of the sampling method used (see pp. 64–65), these figures are probably not perfectly representative except for the city Santal, who were completely surveyed; but the order of difference is significant. Most of this literacy

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TABLE 1

NUMBER OF ABORIGINE PUPILS*

Year	*Number*
1924–25	4,801
1925–26	5,221
1926–27	5,569
1927–28	5,974
1928–29	6,140
1929–30	6,111
1930–31	6,068
1931–32	6,244
1932–33	6,730
1933–34	6,555
1934–35	6,569
1935–36	6,618
1936–37	6,466
1937–38	6,877
1938–39	8,473

is such a potent cultural divider that social relations are generally unintelligible today without knowledge of the education of the participants. In conversation, the Santal constantly differentiate people according to whether they are "educated-literate" (*paraoć*; Hindi: *parna* = to read) or "ignorant-illiterate" (*murukh*; Hindi = ignorant). Education and literacy not only confer social prestige; they also produce a qualitatively different kind of Hinduization than the casual acceptance of a

* (Mukherjea) While it is true that there are other "aborigines" in Mayurbhanj, the Santal are the largest of such groups, and there is no reason to think they have contributed a disproportionately small share to these totals. Unfortunately there are no later figures available, nor are there comparable figures for Singhbhum.

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177 few Hindu traits. It is the depth of change which education may
871 produce that holds such significance for Santal solidarity.

[554] Most schools, particularly beyond the first few classes, are not located in Santal villages or even *bustees* and therefore require attendance out of the social context of the Santal community. High schools and colleges are found only in towns and cities, so that the Santal attending these institutions often have to spend the entire school year in these alien communities. Removed from their own supporting social milieu, Santal students are exposed to Hindu influences; since almost all these schools are dominated by Hindu headmasters and teachers, considerable internationalization of Hindu beliefs, attitudes, and practices occurs.

177 In the Hindu-dominated schools many Santal have learned
262 not to eat beef; from their schoolmates and instructors they
871 hear that beef eating is degrading, but more than this they observe the abhorrence with which it is regarded. They are also told that beef eating is injurious to health: every Santal student has heard and many believe that "you will become blind if you eat beef during the period of your schooling." However, not every Santal who attends school abandons beef eating permanently. Many resume the practice after completing school, and some never abandon it. While some of the old, uneducated elite also learned not to eat beef, the internalization of the Hindu prohibition which is achieved in school tends to be more profound: internalization leads to wholesale Hinduization rather than the piecemeal adoption of isolated Hindu practices. In general, the longer the schooling, the more profound the internalization. Prior to the 1940's one might have expressed this relationship behaviorally by saying that the probability, e.g., of re-adopting beef eating declines with schooling, but in these days, as shall be shown, new forces have reversed matters be-

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177 haviorally. A Santal student with only a few years of schooling
262 may have learned the rank value of a given practice such as
871 beef eating, but may not have internalized the appropriate feeling of repugnance. He will therefore eat beef and drink rice beer on the sly, but prefer to be known as an abstainer.

177 The "pleasure" traits and the "pleasure" orientation, as well
554 as cow-sacrifice and beef eating, are not only part of the cul-
871 tural basis of external solidarity; they are also key attributes
181 of low rank value in the prevailing caste system. In the schools one learns, with varying force, that the dominant and powerful Hindus regard both the orientation and the traits associated with it as abhorrent and as symbols of low status. With a high school education or more, internalization is usually adequate to provide Santal with their own abhorrence of this orientation. Such Santal, particularly if they do not return to their native villages but take up residence in Jamshedpur, find themselves unable to participate in the traditional "pleasure" activities, even when they return to or visit a village or *bustee*.

What replaces the "pleasure" orientation is an increased commitment to rank improvement, adequate knowledge of the rank attributes of the Hindu world, and, in the case of the relatively well-educated Santal, the necessary internalization to display these attributes consistently and adequately. As the Santal commonly say, "The 'ignorant-illiterate' do not know who is big and who is small!"

Increased education resulting from the existence and practice of industrial employment has thus widened the cultural gap between the Santal and thereby weakened Santal solidarity. Many uneducated Santal are barely able to interact with the educated and highly acculturated. As one Santal remarked when faced with the prospect of such interaction, "I cannot go to his

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177 554 871 181 house, he is like a *Diku*; before him I feel like a black Santal." I have heard other Santal remark that they could not sing or talk freely before a certain educated Santal who was a village leader because his bearing made them ill at ease. It seems particularly difficult to carry on the normal "pleasure" activities such as dancing, singing, drinking, and even convivial conversation, before such august Santal. The same gap seen from the vantage point of the educated is expressed in the following remarks of an educated woman:

> I am happy now to be living in the city because both my child and I were sick from "envy" [i.e., being "envied" by others] when we lived in the *bustee*; all are healthy here. I never danced or sang in the village though I liked to watch; my mother and sister danced but I didn't. When very young I did, but after I started going to school, I didn't. Some don't send their children to school because others will have "envy" and say that highly educated girls will be outcasted for marrying into other castes; that is not true. Why shouldn't we study as high as money allows? *Diku* girls do.

[192] Less eloquent educated Santal simply explain matters by saying that they have become "embarrassed" (*lajao*) to dance, sing, etc.

177 871 If differential Hinduization is the major component of the gap created by education, it is not the only component. An additional divisive effect of education is that it gives the student a secular orientation which is highly differentiating but of limited effect since only those with college educations acquire it thoroughly. There are various manifestations of this orientation, but a particularly interesting example which I have discussed elsewhere[3] concerns differences in beliefs about witch-

177 754 871 184

[3] Orans 1959.

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177 craft in village, *bustee*, and city. There is increasing secularization of witchcraft belief from village to city, with the *bustee* occupying something of an intermediate position. Among the *bustee* Santal, some are skeptical about the existence of witches, or at least claim to be; I reported such remarks as "Yes, I have seen lights from what are said to be witches, but who knows if they really were? I have never seen a witch myself although others say that they have. Since I have not seen for myself, how can I say whether or not they exist?" Many city Santal argued that witchcraft was not properly speaking a supernatural phenomenon at all but a kind of magical technique, only seemingly supernatural, and referred to it appropriately enough as "mesmerism." A few city Santal positively denied the existence of witchcraft, calling it a superstition of the "ignorant." One student in the Jamshedpur Cooperative College gave a totally naturalistic explanation. In the course of his studies he had read a psychology book which said that people frequently imagine that they see things that they are very much afraid of. He accepted this as a convincing explanation of witchcraft congenial to his acquired secular outlook.

754 871 184

In an earlier interpretation of these differences in belief I gave too much credit to mere residence in the environs of Jamshedpur and the cultural contacts it entailed. Later in my field work I encountered views among the highly educated villagers which were not different than those of the city Santal. I did note, even at the time, that there were no signs of such secularism among the father or the Santal neighbors of the Jamshedpur Cooperative College student mentioned above; indeed, these uneducated Santal found the psychological explanation quite unconvincing. Examination of background material

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177 754 871 184 on those city Santal having a secular view of witchcraft indicates that almost all were exceptionally well-educated. The differences between village, *bustee*, and city Santal in witchcraft belief are statistical, reflecting the differences in education between the members of these three kinds of communities.

184 556 871 Increased education is significant for the solidarity of the Santal since it is not equally distributed among them. Generally, it widens the gap between the Santal who are already wealthier and occupy prestigeful hereditary positions and the mass of Santal without wealth or position. This differential distribution of education results from its cost; there are the direct expenses for tuition and books and living expenses away from home, plus the sacrifice of labor which farm families in particular must make in sending their children to school. The cultural gap [754] furthers the social gap. As indicated, the educated and traditional elite are "envied" and fearful of "envy"; in spite of the secular explanations given of witchcraft, many Santal working and living in Jamshedpur are reluctant to return to their villages for fear of witchcraft and the "envy" which is held to motivate it. The same fear prompts the powerful and wealthy who have children attending school to keep those children out of their native village, lest their presence arouse "envy."

177 184 871 Besides straining internal relations by accentuating divisive tendencies already present, by increasing Hinduization education reduces the differences between Santal and Hindu and thereby threatens the external aspect of solidarity. The very orientation and practices which served so well to separate the Santal from the Hindu are simultaneously the attributes of low status in the prevailing system of caste ranking. To maintain these practices which serve solidarity so well is to forego the

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opportunities of rank improvement through emulation of high Hindu practices. To abandon these practices is to weaken solidarity. The ambivalence which this situation arouses, and which continually manifests itself in the course of Santal-Hindu relations, shall be referred to as the "emulation-solidarity conflict." Increased education resulting from industrial development and employment may then be said to have increased emulation of Hinduism and decreased Santal solidarity.

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121 tribal peoples has been most marked, special circumstances attend the disruptions. In most of Africa, money wages and industrial work have been accompanied by the separation of the wage worker from his village, with his consequent removal from the sanctions and social controls of the tribal society."[8]

121 177 166 The pronounced cultural and social changes observed among the Santal should add to the evidence indicating the significance of migration. In addition the microscopic form of anthropological inquiry used with the Santal reveals something more of the *modus operandi* of migration to industrial employment than can be seen at the macroscopic level at which Weber operated.

Traditional Marriage Forms

177 184 583 The Santal have a number of legitimate or quasi-legitimate forms of marriage. It is the manner in which a marriage is contracted, i.e., whether or not it is arranged, and the way in which it is celebrated, which define the form. The various forms are graded by cost and elaboration of the ceremonies performed, and differ significantly in the ceremonial content. There are relatively few arranged marriages among Santal industrial workers living in *bustees* as compared to those among the Santal living in their traditional native villages. The results of my research into this difference indicate that it is the result of migration to industrial employment, that the shift to unarranged marriages among the workers is the result of weakened bonds with both kin and villages, and finally that this is the result of neither migration nor industrial employment singly, but rather of the two together.

583 192 177 The marriage form with the highest prestige and involving the greatest expenditure is known as *duar itut' sindur* ("placing

[8] Nash 1958:113.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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vermilion on the bride at the door"), *duar bapla* ("door marriage"), or *Diku bapla* ("Hindu marriage"); henceforth it shall be referred to as *DB*. All these names call attention to the fact that in this form, as distinct from all others, vermilion is applied to the bride before the door of the bride's house rather than the groom's. The term *Diku bapla* reminds one in addition that application of vermilion at the bride's house is the Hindu custom, while in all other forms of marriage it is applied at the groom's house. It also points to the fact that this form generally involves more Hindu traits than any other. Unlike the other forms, a proper *DB* requires the hiring of a Hindu band and dancers, and the performance, before the application of vermilion, of the marriage of the bride to a tree, a rite which is practiced by many neighboring Hindu castes. The *DB*, like other arranged marriages, allows the couple if they are mature to give or withhold consent before marriage arrangements are completed. Such consent is almost always forthcoming, for a Santal girl rarely dares to go against her parents' wishes. Nearly all the inhabitants of both the bride's and groom's village are involved in the marriage ceremony and ensuing activities. A large party from the groom's village accompanies the groom to the village of his bride. Tradition requires his family to hire from some Hindu caste (usually Harijans or members of other castes of low status) a number of men to carry the groom on a palanquin to the bride's house; a Hindu dancing girl and entertainers ought also to be part of the entourage. Today, if the groom happens to be a TISCO worker returning to his village to have a *DB* marriage, he may be borne by a hired taxi instead. One such worker imported for the occasion, a hired wagon equipped with a phonograph and loud speakers, thereby enabling his rural brethren to listen

585 to Indian cinema music in which the syncopations of "rock 'n
495 roll" were considerably in evidence.
533 The large number of participants in a *DB* not only gives
585 testimony to affluence of the families being united but is indicative that the marriage establishes a bond between villages as well as between kin and the couple. This broader social implication is borne out by certain obligatory acts in all marriage forms but is particularly conspicuous in the two highest forms.
585 In both of these forms the concern of the entire village is most
524 dramatically expressed in two rites which precede the marriage, i.e., the "scold the husband song" (*jawā eger sereñ*) and the "riddle song" (*episet' seren'*). The first of these rites, which is performed in the bride's village before the marriage rite itself, involves mocking the appearance, virtue, and wealth of the groom and his party and is done by the assembled village females. The second rite is led by a collection of village representatives (*mōṛe hoṛ*) which may include any of the married men of the bride's village. They halt the groom's party along the pathway to the bride's house demanding answers to riddles. It is made to appear that the groom's party shall not be permitted to pass if the correct answers are not forthcoming. On one occasion which I observed, the correct answers were not given, so that the groom's party could only move on by the grace of the village representatives and after being somewhat humiliated. It would appear that the type of riddles posed could not be divined without prior instruction in certain traditional knowledge. One hears such riddles as the following: "What is it that tied walks and untied sits and rests?" Answer: "When you plow, then you tie the bullocks, and you tie the plow to the yoke; if you tie them they will walk and you will chase them; when you finish, you untie them, bullocks and yoke." Or to give

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583 riage is fixed at two cows if the bride's father is living, and one if he is dead. Additional payments made by the groom's guardians include the presentation of dhotis to the bride's guardians and to a number of her co-villagers; the cost of these gifts is not fixed but will be greater in a *DB* than in any other form of marriage. The really heavy costs, however, stem from the necessity of transporting and feeding the large party which accompanies the groom's party to the bride's village, hiring the palanquin-bearers or taxi, as the case may be, and providing rice beer for all one's own villagers as well as food for many visitors and relatives from other villages. In a *DB* the groom's guardians may invite a few Hindu acquaintances, whose presence would enhance their Santal host's prestige. Hindus are seldom invited to other forms except occasionally to the second highest form. The total cost of a *DB* in 1957 was Rs. 800–1,500, or, at the going price for rice, 3,200–6,000 lbs.

• 177 184 583 That the highest, most expensive, and socially most exclusive form (*DB*) tends to be practiced only by the elite Santal, who are also the most Hinduized, is a reflection of the greater acculturation of the elite; it also reflects the general concession of rank to the Hindus, since all Santal regard the *DB* as the highest form.

583 [192] The second most expensive and prestigeful form of marriage ceremony is the *sañge bariat* (*sañge* = many; *bariat* = groom's party; Hindi: *barat* = groom's party). *SB* suggests by its name that like the *DB* it is an arranged marriage involving important and numerous people who accompany the groom to the village of the bride. In bride-price and other gifts and exchanges, it requires about the same expenditure as a *DB*; but since the number of people invited to partake of food and rice beer in both the groom's and bride's village is not so many as in a *DB*, and

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177 What began as a shift resulting from migration to industrial
178 employment and consequent weakening of traditional social
184 bonds may have affected the norms by lessening the stigma of
583 low status traditionally associated with the *NB.*
584 If one may use the term "modernization" to designate those indigenous developments or borrowings which are patently adaptive or characteristic of industrial urban societies, the shift to unarranged marriages with attenuated ceremonial is an example of modernization. Thus, while industrial development and migration to industrial employment have in a number of ways weakened Santal solidarity, the modernization which it has encouraged has in some respects suggested cultural alternatives not characteristic of traditional Hindu society. Insofar as this has been true, modernization has contributed to the maintenance of distinctiveness and solidarity and thereby inhibited
[171] assimilation. Many aspects of modernization, however, are likely to be equally operative among Hindu and Santal, especially in the long run, so that the cultures are made more alike.*

The Decline of Ceremonies in Bustee *and City*

177 Even a casual observer might note that ceremonies in the
178 *bustee* as compared with those in the village are less well at-
184 tended and often attenuated. As for the city Santal, they prac-
796 tice no communal forms of worship like those traditionally performed at the "Sacred Grove" as long as they remain in the city; often they do not even perform ancestor worship in

[114] * Dr. Milton Singer called my attention to the significance of modernization with respect to my data on marriage and ceremonial and pointed out its significance in terms of acculturation and assimilation, though I am of course responsible for the form that his remarks have assumed above.

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their Company houses. The temptation to interpret these changes as manifestations of increased secularity on a folk-urban continuum is great. However, a close look at the data suggests that the decline of ceremonies is not so much a question of increased secularity as it is a question of situational factors involved in migration to industrial employment. These factors operate directly to inhibit ceremonial practice and participation and operate indirectly to the same end by contributing to lack of solidarity in the *bustee* and city. Since ceremony both reflects and reinforces solidarity, its decline is both a cause and an effect of declining solidarity.

In the course of field work, I observed and participated in a number of ceremonies in the village, Fanderkuta, and the *bustee*, Daredih. Information concerning ceremonial practices was also obtained by interviews with informants from a variety of villages and *bustees*. Because of a suspicion that my presence, particularly in Daredih, had significantly altered the usual practice, my field assistant observed and reported on one ceremony, *Baha*, after I had left India. His report indicates that my suspicions were well founded. The reasons for decreased participation in and attenuation of ceremonies in the *bustee* as compared with the village are readily apparent if one examines the *Baha* ceremony as practiced in the two communities. Similar reports could be given of any of the other communal ceremonies.

Baha is the great spring festival celebrated in March* and ranking second in importance among annual ceremonies.† The word *Baha* means flower and refers here to the flowers of the Sal tree (*sarjom*; *shorea robusta*) and of the tree known as

* Actually in the Hindu month of *Phalgun* (February–March).

† The most important is known as *Sohrae* and will be briefly discussed later.

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priest's brothers remarked that "the working people come only when it is time to eat." The priest also complained of this, as he had done at several other ceremonies. However, there were many more present than is usual, for my camera and the prospect of having a photograph taken which might later be obtained from me was a potent lure to these people. My assistant reported almost no workers present at these same rites after I had left India. The remainder of the ceremonies are performed as in the village, except that there is no procession of dancing men and women to lead the priest back into the village.

The attenuation of the ceremony and the relative non-participation of migrant industrial workers is not significantly the result of secularization. In spite of many interviews and casual discussions about the supernatural I found little evidence of decreased belief in the deities or the efficacy of rites. Also, many of these men occasionally returned to their villages for various festivals, and when I saw such men in their native villages I found their participation as ardent and regular as that of any villager.

In my view the most important cause of this attenuation of, and non-participation in, ceremonies is limited identification with the *bustee*, and there is evidence that this is the result of migration to industrial employment. The second most important cause of attenuation and non-participation is the time demands of industrial employment.

Those who participate most regularly and fully have strong grounds for identifying with the *bustee*. Almost all are natives of Daredih. The two other regular and full participants include the only immigrant worker who has bought land in Daredih and a very early immigrant who has become assistant headman.

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177 178 184 796 621 The former, who had no land in his native village, frequently told me that for him Daredih was his village; the latter, by virtue of his position, of which he is extremely proud, is required to attend rites, and no doubt his status makes the *bustee* and its deities more his own than would otherwise be the case. The others, who have neither agricultural land nor position in Daredih, feel that it is not their village, that the local gods are not quite their gods, that the priest is not quite their priest, and that the founder of the village is not the founder of their village. This lack of commitment is reflected in both the attenuation of and non-participation in the various ceremonies of *Baha*. The Santal themselves say, "Here all are workers so we don't worship so much," or simply, "Here we don't worship so much."

[769] This interpretation rather than secularization is supported by the observation that ancestor worship is generally practiced even by those who do not attend the community rites performed by the priest; in ancestor worship it is, of course, one's own ancestors who receive the offering. The failure to dance before the priest's house and the failure to provide him with a dancing procession to and from the Sacred Grove are indications that he is not quite their priest; the same explanation accounts for their frequent failure to contribute to the sacrifices on behalf of the *bustee*. Indeed, the Santal themselves regard all of these acts as signs of respect to the village leaders, and as already indicated, the priest often complains on this score.

Nor can all these acts, which both express and serve to weaken the solidarity of Daredih, be entirely due to the time [793] demands of industrial employment. The priest is himself an industrial worker, as are many of his patrilineal relatives who live in Daredih, and they are regular participants. Also, the

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177 number of immigrant workers present when it comes time to
178 eat the offerings that have been made, drink the rice beer which
184 has been offered, and join in secular dancing for pleasure is
796 invariably greater than those present during the performance
621 of village ceremonials.

It is not that the immigrant workers regard it as wrong to worship the deities of the *bustee*'s Sacred Grove or to offer respect to its priest and founder; on occasion and in varying degrees they will do both. Except for "Old Man Headman" and the boundary deities, the same beings are celebrated in their native villages. It is rather a question of having less attachment than of opposition. As these workers say when asked about non-participation, "It is all right because all is being done properly in my native village."

182 Typically, migration to industrial employment does not re-
423 sult in acquisition of agricultural land at the new place of
464 residence; both limited availability of land in such areas as
621 well as alternative employment make this difficult. Lack of agricultural land belonging to the *bustee* limits identification. Ownership of such land has the opposite effect; as the regular attendance at Daredih's communal ceremonies by immigrant workers who had purchased land there tends to show. Similarly, the Santal have a long history of migration, and Santal who move to a new village where they acquire land show none of the signs of lack of identification characteristic of immigrant workers in Daredih. Thus it is not simply migration which is responsible for diminished solidarity, but migration to industrial employment.

177 The *Baha* festival was, of course, not the only ceremonial
178 casualty of migration to industrial employment of which I saw
184 evidence at Daredih. At the great *Sohrae* festival, held in Oc-
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177 tober when the harvest is in, the final fourth day's rites are
178 eliminated; these are primarily concerned with collecting and
184 stealing rice beer and food from all the houses. During this
796 festival a rite is performed in which the villagers' cows are made to walk over an area where some eggs have been placed. The owner of the cow which first breaks an egg is considered propitious, and he is required to repay the deities for his good fortune by providing the rice beer to be offered on the following year. At the ceremony in Daredih few were in attendance, and that few did not include the immigrant worker whose cow had previously broken the egg, so that another man had to provide the rice beer. Finally, there was a noisy dispute within the *bustee* because the immigrant workers assembled for dancing on the dancing ground (*akhra*) in their section rather than before the house of the headman, as they should have done according to tradition.

At the festival of Sakrat in mid-February, the third most elaborate ceremony, the custom of going house-to-house to collect rice beer is shortened from three days to one day; in addition, a rite in which arrows are shot at pole targets is not practiced. At a village not half a mile further away from the town and only a short distance from Daredih arrow-shooting is practiced; but in this village almost all are native villagers practicing agriculture though the headman and a few others are factory workers besides being farmers. This negative instance of attenuation and non-participation provides further proof of the critical significance of migration to industrial employment.

182 If limited identification with the *bustee* is primarily respon-
184 sible for the decline of ceremony, the time demands of indus-
796 trial employment have been an unwitting accomplice. The time

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demands of factory employment are in certain critical ways different than those of agricultural labor. For example, TISCO works on three eight-hour shifts, while the hours of agricultural labor are typically identical for all. Furthermore, in a number of departments of a steel mill there are no occasions, barring a strike, when all work comes to a standstill. This industrial situation makes it impossible for all Santal workers of the community to be present for a ceremony during any fixed period. Some departments give a leave of absence to all their workers for major Hindu festivals, but Santal ceremonials do not always coincide in time with Hindu ones. Nor could such an adjustment, if desired, be easily made, since Santal villages have no fixed days for their ceremonies and each village chooses a day or several days within the appointed month during which the villagers will be free of agricultural labor.

There is a third factor to be taken account of, though it is so entwined with lack of identification that it may only be distinguished analytically. Since the immigrant workers seldom have agricultural land in the *bustee*, some of the rites performed at various ceremonies which concern agricultural abundance, such as *Baha*, are of diminished interest. To be sure, they probably have land in their native village contributing to their own and their relatives' income, but, as they remark, "It is all right not to participate here because it is all being done properly in my native village." This attitude is closely related to lack of identification since, as already indicated, the place where one has land is likely to be regarded as one's own village. Connected with this attitude is the immigrant worker's intention of eventually retiring to his native village to live off the land. He may even look forward to purchasing his land with his industrial earnings.

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783 the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is
273 that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction
369 is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not
769 practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees*.

Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single sec-
177 tion of the city and to build their own houses, they might at
327 least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the
369 policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles
362 which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

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464 Migration to industrial employment has acted as a socio-cultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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Chapter 5 The Extent of Hindu Absorption

The effects of migration to industrial employment thus far analyzed have been to accelerate the decline of Santal solidarity among the Santal generally and especially among Santal industrial workers. It has thus furthered the same tendency which the closure of the political rank path and the spread of the market and of increased wealth differences accelerated. Before moving on, it is useful to consider how much Hindu social absorption has accompanied this decline in solidarity.

Indian census material on religious identification is often cited as evidence of Hindu social absorption. Converting such figures on the southern Santal to percentages, the following table can be constructed. Conclusions from these figures, which indicate very little in the way of a trend, must be drawn with extreme caution.

My own field observations suggest that these figures do not reflect major changes in religious belief and practice. There are virtually no villages where half or even one-tenth of the Santal practice Hindu rituals distinct from the ritual practices of the other Santal residents, nor is there some sizable propor-

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TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF SANTAL RETURNED AS HINDU
(Census of India 1931)*

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Orissa	44	46	43	48
Chota Nagpur Feudatory States (Seraikela, Kharswan)		0	18	48
Singhbhum	16	3	56	23

tion of villages which follow distinctively Hindu religious practices. I have heard of only one Santal village within the territory occupied by the southern Santal which has abandoned traditional forms of worship and become thoroughly Hinduized. In 1916 Roy reported the conversion to Hinduism of a number of Santal in a Hindu village in Orissa; they were served by an outcast Brahman priest.[1] I met only one Santal who had taken up Hindu religious practices, and he lived in the city of Jamshedpur. Nowhere that I went were Santal served by Brahmans, though in some areas Santal families are occasionally visited by members of the Potkar caste, who bring messages from the dead for a fee. The Santal also employ females of various low Hindu castes to deliver their children and sometimes patronize Hindu practitioners of traditional medicine (*Kubraj*; Hindi).

It is true that until recently the Santal in large numbers took part, in their own way, in various Hindu festivals. At many of the major Hindu festivals the Santal would assemble for mixed dancing, and some would become possessed and speak

* More recent census figures do not contain this information because "caste has been abolished" as a legal entity.

[1] Roy, 1916.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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in the name of the Hindu deities invoked. Although this activity has recently been somewhat curtailed for reasons soon to be discussed, it is still possible to observe Santal worshipping Jugganath at the Cart Festival (*Rath Jatra*) in Baripoda, the capital of Mayurbhanj. Many Santal, even in villages where there are few Hindus, may also be seen immersing the Hindu Tusu goddess. In spite of these activities, in which most Santal have engaged, and even though all Santal ceremonies have some Hindu elements, almost all southern Santal have remained firmly attached to their own deities, and there have been no mass conversions.

The Indian government's figures on Hindu religious identification are largely an artifice of census methods, and since at least the 1920's, often of coercion as well. Culshaw, for example, commments that:

> The prevailing Indian identification of race with religion has caused some confusion in their [the Santals'] minds, but the fact that about 50 per cent of Santal were returned in 1931 as Hindus and most of the remainder as followers of tribal religion indicated the heightened political consciousness of the enumerators more than any real division within the tribe.[2]

Many Santal reported to me that they were pressured by local Hindu authorities to register themselves as Hindus. Others claimed that ignorance played a major role in the returns; the census-takers asked, "What is your religion?" (*Dhorom*; Oriya), and most Santal, it is said, did not understand this word. When it was explained they would reply "Santal religion," and the census-taker would then say, "That is your caste (*jāti*), not

[2] Culshaw 1949:15.

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your religion. Are you Hindu, Muslim, Christian, or what?" By this means the census-takers might obtain the desired result. However, it should be remembered that neither Culshaw, who is a Christian missionary, nor the presently very communally oriented Santal are disinterested observers.

There is no question that since the 1920's at least, Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj have actively campaigned to get tribals to declare themselves as Hindus. Such declarations were regarded as demonstrations of national unity and as refutations of the charge that India was so culturally and socially diverse as to be incapable of nationhood. In view of Hindu pressures and census irregularities, the returns reported may at the most indicate that Santals were finding it increasingly difficult to muster the solidarity to resist Hindu pressure for common religious identification. At the very least, the returns may simply reflect Hindu pressure generated by the Independence Movement.

In spite of the manifold pressures operating to weaken Santal solidarity, there are few cases of actual social absorption. Apparently, the endogenous forces contributing to solidarity have been sufficient to prevent this from happening. However, in view of the experience of other tribes and because of the increase in centrifugal pressures created by industrial employment, it appears that further social absorption was imminent. [171] Certainly centrifugal pressures had increased, and if the political rank path had not suddenly reopened in the 1930's, it seems likely that the Santal would have become as Hinduized as their neighbors, the Bhumij.

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Chapter 7 The "Great Tradition"

177 178 668 One might say that the Santal have been in search of a "great tradition" since the time that they conceded the social and cultural superiority of their Hindu neighbors. Having taken much from these neighbors, but desirous of maintaining their identity, they decided to create a "great tradition" of their own rather than accept the one belonging to their neighbors. [212] There is, for example, an attempt to codify Santal traditions in writing and even the development of a distinctive script in [771] which to record these traditions. In place of an essentially inexplicit religious ideology expressed in ritual, there is the development of an explicit religious ideology with an emphasis on morality. There is also the elaboration of literary forms wholly unlike the unpretentious traditional ones. Paradoxically, while these developments involve rejection of numerous Hindu practices, they introduce fundamental beliefs and values of Hinduism which previously had made hardly any progress among the Santal. Thus, while distinctive traits are re-emphasized, the configurations and orientation of Santal culture become somewhat more like those of the Hindus. However,

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innovative patterns are also arising, particularly through the fusing of traditional and Hindu patterns.

I do not want to portray this striking cultural development as more profane than it is by giving undue emphasis to its connections with political objectives and pursuit of rank. Nevertheless, one must begin by recognizing that this is its source. As very grossly advocated by a somewhat naïve Santal industrial worker who has become a "Member of the Legislative Assembly," the movement is spoken of in the following terms: "We should not leave our religion; we should continue to use rice beer; we should have our worship at the Sacred Grove; also we should not stop eating beef. If we stop eating it our Santal caste will be gone. We will call our religion *Sarna Dhorom** and will tell everyone that our religion is *Sarna Dhorom*." Another Santal entered the conversation saying, "Yes, like Mussulman *Dhorom*, Christian *Dhorom*, so we will call ours *Sarna Dhorom*." A third Santal said, "Yes, if we say *Santal Dhorom*, that is our caste; as the Christians have a church, so our 'temple' (*mandir*; Hindi) is the Sacred Grove." The MLA brought the conversation to a close and down to "practical" matters by saying: "We will maintain our 'drama club'; we will keep our 'culture'; if we keep our 'culture' the government will give us money; if you do a drama I will bring big officers of the Jharkhand party to see."

There are sections of Jharkhand political rallies with such a concentration on culture that one might imagine himself at a festival rather than a political meeting. The local club may perform a play at such a meeting; traditional dances may be

* *Sarna* is the Munda word for "Sacred Grove" (*Jaher* in Santali); *Dhorom* is the Oriya form meaning roughly "religion."

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668 arranged by Jharkhand leaders, some of whom would themselves be ashamed to dance. So potent a political weapon is culture that the great crime of a Santal-elected official who went over to the Congress was that he wrote a pamphlet in which he argued that the Mundari languages were related to Oriya.

Though the cultural movement is intimately connected with politics, the elite who are sparking the movement are quite sincere in their cultural efforts; men are indeed usually capable of sincerely believing in that which is necessary to the pursuit of rank. The sophisticated Santal believes that he is contributing to a resurgence of tribal tradition and at the same time raising it to a higher level. And so he is. But neither the grounds on which he justifies his act nor its effect are the sufficient causes of the cultural movement. Yet despite the basically political source of its energy, the cultural movement has acquired an impetus of its own. There is honor to be gained through cultural creativity, and the Santal elite have begun to experience the pleasure of cultural innovation per se.

The distinctive traits re-emphasized in the new movement are chiefly those mentioned by the MLA whose remarks are recorded above. They are beef eating and cow sacrifice, traditional dances, drinking and offering rice beer, and worship of the traditional gods at the Sacred Grove. The low rank value of these traits makes them ideal boundary markers. These traits serve not only to bind together the Santal but are held in common with most of the tribes which support the Jharkhand movement. They are the banners under which the Jharkhanders march, and their contrast with Hindu banners is conspicuous. Unfortunately, beef eating and dancing are particularly difficult for the educated elite, so that their preaching is often better

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177 178 668 [262] than their practice. For them these are the unresolvable necessities of the new rank path. Some of these Santal whom we met in 1957 had just begun to eat beef again; happily, one city Santal read in a magazine about the virtues of beef eating for health, and his discovery quickly diffused among the rest of the city Santal. Once I saw a young party activist who had grown up during the Jharkhand movement persuading an older Santal with a few years of education that he must take up beef eating again if he wished to preserve the Santal caste. The emphasis given to these distinctive traits serves, of course, not only to keep Santal and Hindu apart but also to narrow the gap between the elite and the ordinary Santal.

177 178 539 668 One of the fundamental changes being wrought in Santal culture is an increased emphasis on work, study, and rank attainment and a concomitant discouragement of "pleasure." A number of recent songs like the following carry this message.

At work time I become drunk and forget my work.
At the time for study I spent my time making friends;
I forgot all about reading and writing.

Babu, boys the same age as you have become pundits at Tata school.
Oh brother in the city of Delhi they have become members of parliament.
Oh brother you were born in a long village.
Oh brother you grew up among friends.
Oh brother you have only become a pundit in divorced women.

Notice in the following song carrying a message like those above the use of un-Santal-like metaphors in the manner of the new "great tradition."

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177 You want to reach the fruit,
178 Without effort you can't reach the higher fruit.
539 Make your mind hard!
668 Release your soul!
Be energetic with your body!
Then you shall reach the fruit which hangs high.

Other songs with Calypso-like Santal manner carry the message of Jharkhand, the necessity of maintaining distinctiveness, the moral-religious connection, and in some cases the new great-traditional style. Notice in particular the intermingling of these themes in these stanzas:

We are natives of this country,
Yet they are driving us out;
They are driving us from our birthplace.
Be learned, brother, be knowing, be a man.

Jai Pal Singh protects us against other castes.
Raghnath Murmu [the founder of a cultural organization] will make us learned and wise.

In the country of Dhalbhum the *Tamak* [a kind of drum] sounds.
In Hanuman's forest the Sakwa [a wild buffalo horn] sounds.
In the "aboriginal" land the deer are devouring the forest.
Sam and Supai [two Jharkhand candidates] sound the bell;
Come great Jai Pal and sound the *Sakwa* to drive the deer away.

For the man of today, *haeri haeri* [ai ai]
On a tree of trouble grows troubled fruit.
Because of sin the body is pained, *haeri haeri.*
Since we are poor we get only *matkom lathe* [a nearly inedible fruit from which the liquor *parua* is made].

The Santal

177 Millet we never get.
178 Day by day we starve and become desiccated, *hasri*.
539 Dirty grass huts, poverty, and sickness cause us to moan, *hasri*.
668 Continuous sickness follows us all our life.
Who will cure this?

Marań Buru is like an *ojha* [medicine man in Santali and Hindi]
He will end this sickness.
Let us drive out this evil by applying our intelligence.
Let us drive it out with our sacred prayers.
This religion will wipe away the sin.
With the help of religion let us bid this evil go.
Then we will obtain heaven's reward, god-given love and joy.
Through religion the poverty and sickness of hell will vanish.

This last song in particular is interspersed with Oriya and [771] Sanskritic words. It also introduces heaven and hell, neither of which has a place in the traditional religion; but Marań Buru, the tribal deity of the Santal, retains his place, and leaders of the Jharkhand political movement are prominent.

The shame which the elite leaders feel for the traditional "pleasure" orientation is expressed in the following song:

After drinking rice beer,
After getting drunk,
A man walks with his *dhoti* falling to the ground.
Seeing all these bad things the aboriginal brother becomes sorrowful.

177 There are several reasons why the traditional "pleasure"
178 orientation is opposed. As already suggested, it is an attribute
181 of low status in the prevailing system of caste ranking, and
668 the elite have internalized a distaste for it, especially for its

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 178 181 668 more manifest appearances. For this reason they particularly oppose mixed dancing. As the songs above make plain, "pleasure" is felt to be a detriment to study, hard work, mobility, and the "progress" of tribals. Almost all Santal industrial workers condemn "too much pleasure," and even in remote villages it is generally felt that "pleasure" needs to be curtailed. However, it is only the educated, and not by any means all of them, who have deeply internalized this attitude and who can make it work for them. At a "fair" (*paṭa* in Hindi and Santali) more than half the Santal present said that fairs are bad; "at these fairs we only run around like dogs and spend our money"; but they were participating nevertheless and having considerable "pleasure."

[871] It is a fact that many Santal fail in school because they are lured away from their studies by the traditional "pleasure"

[461] activities. Similarly, there are some absences without leave from TISCO and some instances of coming to work drunk which are the result of too much "pleasure," particularly during festivals. Through songs, plays, speeches, and even prayers, the new cultural movement has succeeded in making most Santal feel that they ought not to over-indulge; but it would be too much to say that it has succeeded in changing the dominant motif of Santal culture. However, the commitment to personal and tribal mobility and the inhibition of "pleasure" are continually reinforced by the obvious increase in the possibilities of advancement.

[861] It is not yet common in the villages but everywhere apparent in the *bustees* and in Jamshedpur that fathers scold their children for wasting time and remind them that if they do not study they shall end up "throwing about dung" or performing other menial jobs requiring hard and undignified labor. Most

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177 of the young children of Santal industrial workers aspire to
178 a "sitting-down job," if not in Delhi then at least in TISCO.
555 The tension induced by the conflict between rank improvement and the pleasure complex is evident in the demeanor of the young Santal trying to resist the old siren songs of their culture. The Santal of ordinary means recognizes that life is generally short and hazardous and that the path to success is arduous and the goal uncertain of attainment. Under such circumstances it is remarkable how many Santal are committed to rank improvement.

177 The disruptive force of "envy" and associated witchcraft
178 has been attacked in two fashions. All but the most isolated
754 Santal now believe that "envy," and with it witchcraft and
871 much disease, will disappear as the Santal, especially their females, become educated. The rationale for this hope is that education will impart virtue and improve rank; how then will it be possible for the virtuous and prosperous to be envious? As the Santal point out, the "educated *diku* women do not practice witchcraft, so neither will ours once they are similarly educated."

668 The second anti-"envy" doctrine is more sophisticated, has
754 Great-Traditional qualities, and is a genuine example of cultural innovation. It was developed by a brilliant Santal high-school graduate, Ragnath Murmu, who lived for some time in a *bustee*, where he carried on "cultural work"; he has since retired to his native village. According to his view, there are witches who practice witchcraft because of "envy." However, they can cause sickness only in a person who has committed some sin. The solution to the problem of illness which is caused in part by witchcraft and in part by one's own sin is to live a

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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668 539 771 ligion. . . . Some literate people also are leading us in a bad direction. In eating and clothing we often follow the *diku* way; we are departing from the way of our own society.

• 177 178 796 The final cultural manifestation to be discussed brings us back to the Durga Puja anecdote with which this chapter began. In the spirit of solidarity every effort is being made to prevent attendance at and participation in Hindu ceremonies. One of the dangers inherent in attendance and participation is the emulation of Hindu ways and the development of Hindu identification. The second danger stems from the manner of Santal participation, i.e., the Santal tendency to engage in mixed dancing, to become drunk, and in general to publicly display those forms of "pleasure" which are the attributes of low rank. The third danger bears a resemblance to the objection voiced by the city Santal, Mr. F., that the Santal are cheated by the clever *dikus*. No doubt there is some cheating, but what is really objectionable is that on such occasions considerable money is spent on "pleasure" and is thus not available for the serious business of rank improvement.

184 668 796 A more positive attempt to increase solidarity is the recent effort to get all Santal villages to celebrate their festivals simultaneously and to set the dates for such occasions so that they will not coincide with Hindu ceremonies. This effort has had a limited success in Mayurbhanj but has not been adopted generally because (1) the traditionally important visiting and reciprocity made possible by non-simultaneous ceremonies would have to be sacrificed, and (2) industrial workers now attending those of their own festivals which are held at the same time as Hindu ones on "free time" (permissible leave periods during which they are paid) would have to take leave without pay or forego all ceremonies. In principle, however,

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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186 Nevertheless, to whatever degree and in whatever form such
121 acceptance occurs, the syndrome becomes operative.
• 177 The evidence of Santal rank concession is manifold. It will
186 be recalled that the earliest historical evidence shows the Santal adopting and abandoning traits on the basis of their rank value in Hindu society. The acceptance of alien rank values can hardly ensue without rank concession. The Santal themselves say that "the *diku* are big and knowing people" and their demeanor as they interact with Hindus, particularly of high caste, confirms acceptance in fair measure of their inferior status. Even today, in a period of renewed solidarity, the Santal are striving to "raise themselves" to the level of the "*diku*," as they say. The term *diku* is, of course, evidence enough of the ambivalence of the concession, and the history of Santal-Hindu relations has provided the Santal with sufficient reason to hate and fear as well as admire their Hindu neighbors. The earliest historical information indicates not only that rank concession must have begun considerably before British control, but that it was particularly pronounced among the traditional Santal elite. There is, for example, the myth of the Kisku king who became a Hindu and was forsaken by his fellows and the myth of Santal society constructed as a set of functionally specialized castes with each clan occupying a caste position.

To accept inferior status is to accept the attributes of rank of the superior society, and such acceptance produces a tendency to emulation. This emulation is an effect of rank concession, and evidence for it as well. The many examples noted of Santal emulation of the dominant Hindu society are to be understood as arising from the universal tendency of societies which have conceded rank to emulate. They may also be regarded as supporting evidence, to indicate rank concession, though rank

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 concession can be independently observed in Santal social rela-
186 tions with Hindus as well as inferred from Santal comments about the social superiority of the *diku*.

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177 Such an emulative tendency, if put into practice, may at first
186 lead to gross copying. Without internalization of emulative
554 attitudes it is not likely to accomplish its objective and results in the kind of imitation epitomized by the *nouveau riche*. Such behavior appears gauche and thereby generates its own tendency toward internalization. Emulation may be directed toward attaining rank in interaction with social units belonging to the dominant society or within one's own society.

To concede that another society is more powerful is not tantamount to conceding it superior rank. Such a power concession generates its own borrowing tendencies, which might be termed "power incorporative borrowing," since it involves regarding the more powerful society's traits as possessing a special efficacy, which arises by projecting onto these traits the power of the dominant society. But while power concession does not imply rank concession, rank concession is almost always accompanied by and therefore implies power concession. Rank concession will therefore always be associated with both emulation and power incorporative borrowing. Emulation and power incorporation are often intermingled in particular acts and serve to maintain borrowed practices as well as to generate new borrowings. Power incorporation appears in its purest form in Santal curing practices, whose end is primarily curing efficacy or the belief in such efficacy, though the prestige which accrues to the practitioner who employs borrowed practices is
[755] not without significance. For example, one commonly hears Bengali and Oriya songs and Sanskritic prayers as essential elements in curing rites, though often even the practitioner

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177 does not understand the words. Such practices could hardly
186 have been borrowed because of a peculiar "fit" of their content
554 with traditional Santal patterns. Certainly such practices are not
755 naturalistically more efficacious. It is rather a case of connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as "*big* and *knowing* people."

121 There is a third reason for the tendency to adopt practices
177 of the dominant society, one which follows almost inevitably
186 from the condition of being encysted. This is the "external
648 pressure" brought to bear by the dominant society on the encysted society to adopt its customs. The basis for the near inevitability of this pressure is nothing less than the solidarity needs of the dominant society. Surrounding dominant societies must demand allegiance to at least the official symbols of suzerainty; acceptance of a number of other customs is likely also to be demanded as the solidarity needs of the dominant society increase. There are likely also to be a number of customs of the encysted society which the superior society finds repugnant, a reaction which invariably creates some pressure for "reform" of the encysted society. The pressures exerted on the encysted society may include positive rewards for compliance or coercive acts by police or even by an army.

648 Perhaps the oldest and most continuous of such pressures
782 on the Santal has been governmental interference with Santal cow sacrifice and beef eating. Armed interference has been practiced everywhere and has not ceased under present democratic conditions. Cow sacrifice has continued, but in secret so as to avoid prosecution and interruption of the rites. However, some villages, fearing arrest and harassment, have abandoned such sacrifice, particularly where there are Hindus in the village who might report this activity to the authorities. There is no

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648 782 question that this pressure is the result of repugnance as well as solidarity needs.

The tendency to borrow which follows rank concession undermines solidarity, for all borrowing, by reducing distinctiveness, weakens solidarity, and borrowing of traits which directly represent solidarity is especially debilitating. Emulative borrowing not only eradicates boundary markers but is destructive of the internal aspect of solidarity, since it is likely to be more intense among segments of the encysted society with superior status. This differential emulation arises largely because of the following conditions: (1) the elite tend to have more intimate contact with members of higher social units because they are often representatives of their society in inter-societal relations, (2) they may attract a coterie belonging to higher social units but personally limited in political and economic power; such a coterie derives political and economic advantage from the relationship and confers prestige on its benefactor, (3) no amount of emulation in the absence of the requisite political and/or economic power can achieve rank improvement; the recognition of this fact contributes to differential emulation since the wealthy and powerful are the only ones in a position to attain higher rank in exogenous relations through emulation. Such differential emulation and the type of external relations described here have been noted among the Santal as well as other tribes in the area.

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The impact of differential emulation on internal solidarity is to reduce "likeness" and to provide a cultural basis for divisive status distinctions. The ubiquitousness of "envy" and connected witchcraft in Santal social relations, and the difficulty of relations between the educated Santal elite and the non-elite exemplify this effect. The cultural gap between the

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• 177 554 traditional, uneducated elite and the ordinary Santal was not nearly so great, nor relations between them so strained.

177 62 692 In addition to the borrowing tendencies which flow from rank concession and the external pressure exerted on encysted societies, there is another centrifugal tendency inherent in being an encysted society: political-judicial encroachment. The increasing jurisdiction of Hindu courts and "village *panchayat*" over affairs formerly handled endogenously are an example; there are also such benefits as the issuance of scholarships, health protection and treatment, digging of tube wells, etc. These encroachments on areas formerly managed by the traditional social organization diminish its authority and importance and serve to attach the Santal more firmly to the surrounding society.

ooo All of the borrowing tendencies which flow from rank concession plus external pressure and encroachment on encysted societies tend to diminish solidarity. If there were no countervailing forces, the world would long ago have become more culturally homogeneous and socially unified than it is. A highly potent force contributing to cultural distinctiveness derives from the necessity of preserving solidarity. Although the basis of solidarity has been widely explored by sociologists and structural anthropologists, there is one condition of solidarity-maintenance which has not received much attention, and it is decisive within the RCS. I refer to the relation between avenues of mobility, or rank paths, as I have called them, and the maintenance of solidarity: some rank paths support solidarity and some undermine or destroy solidarity. Emulation might be assigned to the class of destructive rank paths, but since it is never a successful path in the absence of political and/or economic power, it is not by itself likely to pose a serious threat

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121 which is so apparent in India. With compelling documentation he indicates not only the prevalence of great traditional Sanskritic practices at the village level but also simultaneously a tendency for little traditional, non-Sanskritic traits to retain their place. Following a suggestion of Redfield and Singer, he suggests that there is a flow upward from the little community to the great centers where the literati reside ("Universalization") as well as flow in the reverse direction ("Parochialization"). He emphasizes that transformation of what is received occurs at both levels. Adopting a cultural mode of analysis, he accounts for the maintenance of two traditions by the differing cultural screens of the two levels through which diffused traits must pass. The RCS theory suggests that solidarity pressures might also be responsible for the transformations which take place, and therefore for the maintenance of two distinct traditions. Many of the cultural variations within both little and great traditions which Marriott finds at the village level might similarly be accounted for.[4]

Much of anthropology, and through anthropology the other social science disciplines, have come to be dominated by the "configurational" theory of borrowing. This idea, made explicit and deservedly famous by Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*, suggests that what is borrowed by a culture either "fits" its configurations or is likely to be modified so as to fit. Though there is much evidence in favor of this theory, if it were the whole story, either there would be no change in cultural configurations or all such change would be essentially endogenous. Santal absorption of Hindu orientations and even of specific antipathies makes it clear that even configurations can be borrowed; a casual glance at the world today provides

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[4] Marriott 1955.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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innumerable additional examples, such as the Indians themselves and the Chinese Communists. Potentialities for rapid cultural change are far greater than the configurational process alone can take account of.

The RCS theory suggests that inherent in rank concession are the potent forces of emulation and power-incorporative borrowing, which contribute to the acceptance of "incongruent" traits, i.e., traits that do not fit traditional configurations. This is not to say that congruence is irrelevant, but that it may be overridden in the pursuit of rank. The theory therefore helps to explain why non-congruent traits are borrowed and under what conditions. Besides making this kind of cultural flexibility intelligible, the RCS provides a partial explanation of culture movements which are seen to be stimulated by the emulation-solidarity conflict.

The RCS suggests new functions for what Herskovits has referred to as reinterpretation and syncretism. Herskovits has suggested that these transformations serve in "integrating borrowed elements into a recurring culture,"[5] a valuable insight which nonetheless does not account for the borrowing of non-congruent traits. Furthermore, as Herskovits himself says, such "integration" frequently involves "new values" which change the cultural significance of old forms.[6] It would seem that cultural integration could better be maintained by rejection of non-congruent borrowing, and it would appear that "new values" could hardly be borrowed according to the configurational theory. The RCS adds considerations of social integration and rank pursuit to those of cultural integration. The transformations which occur in borrowed material are therefore seen

[5] Herskovits 1949:553.
[6] Herskovits, *ibid.*

[p. 1]

FOREWORD

Fifty years ago, in 1887, the late Rev. L. O. Skrefsrud published The Traditions and Institutions of the Santhals, Horkorgn Mare Hapramko reak Katha, as a guide for the Santals, especially in the customary matters dealt with in the book, and also on account of its ethnological value. It was re-edited by me, in 1916 and 1929, only with a short preface and a few pages of fresh matter, added at the end, at the request of certain Santals. What here follows is a translation with a number of explanatory footnotes and some additional matter. As only a very few would be able to use the work in the original Santali, and as it is of considerable ethnological interest, I have repeatedly been asked to translate it. My translation is absolutely literal, in order to enable the reader, as far as possible, to understand the Santal mentality and way of expression. 128

With the exception of a short story of the Santal insurrection of 1855 the original work was taken down by Skrefsrud from the mouth of an old guru, named Kolean. According to a statement towards the end of the book the dictation was finished on the 15th of February, 1871. 115 128

Skrefsrud once told me, that he had hunted everywhere among the Santals to find a man who knew his people and their traditions and customs, and that Kolean without comparison was the best authority he had been able to find. Skrefsrud further told me, that the book contains absolutely nothing of his own, the whole being a faithful record of Kolean's words and language.

I cannot, however, help thinking that Skrefsrud had something to do with the arrangement. The language is easy and fine, and Kolean's narrative was based on oral tradition handed down verbatim by teacher to disciple, from generation to generation, a practice which, as Skrefsrud states in the Annual Report of the Mission for the year 1887—88, "has now fallen into disuse". 128 538

This does not exclude the possibility of our learning something from other sources, and some Santals have actually narrated things which Kolean did not mention. Sometimes we can see that such tales are adaptations of Hindu lore, as when some gurus maintain that their ancestors followed Rama to fight Ravona in Ceylon. In other cases, especially with regard to Santal customs and institutions, we may have to do with independent lines of tradition. 115 177 178 538

Kolean hailed, as he tells at the end, from a village called Pabea in a "country" (rural district) called Pandra in the district of Manbhum to the southwest of the Santal Parganas.

1 Oslo Etn. Mus. – Bodding.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

He stated that he was a disciple of a guru named Buku. Together with other Santals he had emigrated eastwards. His old home being in Manbhum explains that some very few of his statements are different from what is the present custom in the Santal Parganas.

Kolean was a guru, a designation borrowed from the Hindus but adapted to suit Santal society. A Santal guru is a man who is supposed to know certain things, e. g., what should be recited at some ceremonial functions, and who is able to act as a reciter when called upon to do so. Any Santal can become a guru, by attaching himself to an older guru and gradually learning from him. In this way we cannot expect absolute uniformity throughout.

The use of such recitations may partly be due to imitation of Hindu customs, and there are definite statements in the traditional tales here translated to the effect that the ancestors on a certain occasion, after long deliberations, decided to abandon some customs of their own and to adopt Hindu usages instead. In this connexion it is of interest to note that the Santals often use songs in a foreign language, notably Bihari, during their festivals and at cremations. And it is a curious fact that many Santals do not understand these songs. It is evident that we have, to some extent, to do with borrowings, but it would be an exaggeration to maintain that the whole has been borrowed.

The traditional history of the world as contained in the first part of Kolean's narrative is recited twice in connexion with the life of every Santal, first at the caco chaṭiar, when a child is ceremoniously given full social right, and finally at the bhaṇḍan, the funeral ceremony, when the deceased is handed over to the next world and to the care of the departed ancestors.

P. O. Bodding.

where there was water, there he let sods be put, and in all places where water was bubbling up, there he let it be closed up by pressing pieces of rock down on it. 539

Thereupon, having made a nest in a clump of the sirom plants, the two birds laid two eggs. The female bird would sit on the eggs, and the male bird would find and bring food. Keeping on in this way they hatched the eggs: O mother! two human beings were born, one boy and one girl. Then both of them sang:

O dear dear, on the sea,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, have been brought into the world,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, where are they to be put?

O dear dear, you two please tell him,
O dear dear, the great Ṭhakur Jiu,
O dear dear, the two have been brought into the world,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, where are they to be put?

So they implored Ṭhakur saying: "How shall we two support these two human beings?" Ṭhakur gave them some cotton and said to them: "Whatever you two eat, press the juice out of these things and make a place on the cotton wet therewith, and put this into their mouths to suck." By sucking and getting food in this way they grew and commenced to walk. But as they were growing the anxiety of the two birds increased, viz., where they should put the two when they grew up.

So they besought Ṭhakur, and he said to them: "Do fly round and find for us a place for them to stay. Then they flew towards the setting of the sun; they discovered Hihiṛi Pipiṛi. Having returned they told Ṭhakur of this. He said to them: "Do take them there". Then they took them along carrying them on their backs. They put them down and left them there. What became of Hās Hāsil, this the ancestors of old have not told us; therefore we do not know.

The names of these two human beings were Haṛam and Ayo[10]. Some people call them Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Buḍhi[11]. There in Hihiṛi Pipiṛi they grew up eating the grain of the sumtu bukuć grass and the ears of the sama grass[12]. They had no clothes, they were both naked; still they felt no shame, and they lived in great peace.

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[10] Haṛam is the common word for an old or elderly man; Ayo means in Santali "mother", a word borrowed from an Aryan language. [11] Pilcu haṛam and Pilcu buḍhi are the common designations of the first parents. Haṛam is explained above; buḍhi is the common word for an elder, especially married woman; pilcu means "small, tiny". Buḍhi is an Aryan word. [12] The sumtu bukuć grass is Eleusine aegyptiaca, Pers., and sama grass Panicum colonum, L.

[192] [177] [137]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

let us cut him down!" Then they mounted on each others' shoulders to reach him; but he kicked them, so that they fell down — thud thud. From that time the Muslims have no hair on their head; they have only a chin-beard. We feel more angry with the Muslims and abhor them more than all other races. 539

From Campa the ancestors fled to Tọṛe Pokhori Baha Bandeła[32]. There they stayed for a very long time. Somehow or other also the Dekos entered the open country there in great numbers. Then the country-people came together at the foot of the tọpe sarjọm, labaṛ atnaḳ, the bent Mahua tree; having spread out Lotus-leaves (to sit on) and drinking the water of the Kọṛọ spring, they, whether for twelve years or for twelve days, legislated and ruled, viz., from this day, when we have ceremonies in connexion with birth, with the giving of full social rights, with marriage and wedlock, with dying and death, we shall act and follow such and such customs. There our ancestors, who knows for what reason, upset the rules of the ancient ancestors. Much was mixed up for us with what the Dekos have. In a former age our ancient ancestors did not cremate their dead ones, nor did they take them to the river; they buried them. At marriages they did not apply sindur to the bride either. All this we have learnt from the Dekos[33].

Then they broke up from there and passed through Tọṛe Pokhori Baha Bandeła, who knows whether along the embankment or over the Lotus-leaves, and came up at the foot of the Icạḳ tree[34], that is to say, the men, and the women came up at the foot of the Mahua tree. Then they saw that neither had had their foot-soles wetted, nor had the Lotus-leaves been broken; therefore they said: "We have ruled well; let these very rules and customs remain ours for ever and always." They remained there for a very long time.

Then they fled from there also, who knows for what reason. Some people say, because they feared the Muslims. As they passed along they came to the Bọṛi baḏwaḳ forest. No one was willing to go in there in front of the others; therefore they said: "We shall no one go in front of the others, we shall go in a row beside each other." Then they would cross the forest. At the Jona Jọspur plain they came out and gathered there; and they asked each other: "How is it, have we all come through and out or not?" There also they tried to remain; they were in no way able to stay; therefore they went to Khaspal Belaohja. Whilst living there they were scattered, some to Sir, some to Sikhọr[35] and some to Nagpur. From that time we have mostly been under the Dekos. Only the Kharwars and Birhọr who have joined in marriage with Dekos have landlords of their own; as for us we have lost the name of Kharwar, who knows why. Some people say

[32] The place mentioned is generally taken to be situated somewhere in the northwest of the sources of the Damuda river. The first part of the name seems to be that of a dig tank (pukhri). [33] That the Santals and their ancestors have introduced Hindu customs, adapted to their own needs and ideas, is easily ascertained. [34] Woodfordia floribunda, Salis. [35] Some of the places mentioned are probably in the present Chota Nagpur. Sir is said to be to the southwest of Sikhar, and this lies in a southerly direction from Manbhum.

[823 177 137 823]

VIII. CRIME AND ITS PUNISHMENT

a. The councils.

623 We have three kinds of councils: The village, or headman's council, the outside, or over-
634 chief council, and the hunt, or the council of the people of the country. In the village council the village headman is the president; in the outside-council the Pargana is the president, and in the hunt council the hunt-priest is the president. In the headman's council the 'five men' of the village[1] assist the headman in judging. In the Pargana's council the village headmen under the Pargana and the village people of the neighbourhood assist him in judging. In the hunt-council the people of the whole country assist the hunt-priest in judging. The headman is above the village; the Pargana is above a number of villages. There is nothing fixed; they have not the same number of villages, some have many, others have only a small number under them. We have Dęs Mąńjhis, these are the assistants of the Parganas. From a village headman's judgement they may appeal to the Pargana, and from the Pargana's judgement they may appeal to the people of the country in the burnt forest. From the judgement of the people of the country there is no appeal.

634 The customary perquisites of a Pargana are as follows: From every single village under him he is to get year by year one rupee, half-a-seer clarified butter, and eighty cobs of Indian corn. The Dęs Mąńjhi gets eight annas, a quarter seer clarified butter, and forty cobs of Indian corn every year in the same villages. When the village headmen under the Pargana pay in to him his perquisites, he gives them a feast, and the Dęs Mąńjhi also
177 does the same. Nowadays some village headmen do not give the Pargana the rupee, neither
178 does the Pargana give any feast to the village headmen who pay: they let all pass into
622 desuetude, since the Europeans have appeared in the Santal country. Since these have
634 appeared, the Parganas and the village headmen have become utterly greedy; anyone who
661 is able to give them most money, in his favour they judge, and people of this kind they help in the public courts, and poor people who have no money, they do not take any notice of; without cause or reason they scold and browbeat them and cause their suit to be dismissed.

177 The people of the country are not nice either. They do not inform the village headman,
178 neither do they complain to the Pargana, and to the people of the country they do not
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[1] See Dictionary s. v. mūrę hęr.

appeal either. Also a quarrel between husband and wife these wretched fools at once bring 177
in before the European magistrates, a crying shame; the deceitful Indian pleaders cheat 178
them of their money a good deal; they get one another into prison; their mutual hatred 691
remains with them smouldering like hot-pan fire; this is what they have gained by transgressing the customary judgements of the ancestors. Let them take the great crimes to the courts; but what we have from olden times disposed of ourselves, why do they take heaps of such matter to the courts?

b. Concerning witnesses.

From ancient times up to near the present day we Santals did not know false statements; we were stating what we had seen with our eyes, both about enemies and about 177
our brothers and sisters. After the Europeans have come, a few Santals have been judged 178
to be hanged, because they have spoken the truth. There were no witnesses of their crime; 695
if they had lied and denied it, they would have been set free. In our councils we did not bring the witnesses in one by one; we put all the witnesses forward at once; still they did not tell falsehoods. Nowadays they have learnt deceit from the Dekos, and like them they sell their soul and honour for one brass-cup of beer; and as the magistrates do not know our language, they cannot distinguish falsehood from truth; they are only led astray by the words of the deceitful Indians; therefore we do not get just judgements. We would have any fear of the light swearing in the courts? Let them make them swear like the oaths of our ancestors, then they would tremble, fearing for their life, and they would surely not speak falsely. A few magistrates have let a very short oath in our language be made up by some Dekos; but we only laugh at this oath, because what is said aims at the one who administers the oath. They make them swear like this: "Speak the truth; if I speak what is false a tiger spirit will eat thee". The witness repeats this, following him: "Speak the truth; if I speak what is false, a tiger-spirit will eat thee". Why should witnesses have any fear from this?

c. The different kinds of crime.

682
Among the great crimes are the following: To kidnap children, to sacrifice them, to kill 684
a person by carelessness, to rob one of his wife, to rape a woman, forcibly to apply sindur
to a woman. Our punishment for this was death. The kidnappers steal children, or catch 682
a person on the road, and sacrifice them. If they were caught at the moment, they killed them without any judging, and there was no appeal in this case. When some one inadvertently shot and killed somebody during the hunt, the people passed judgement and let the person be killed in return. At such a time they let the man who shot and killed the other, stand where the man was who was shot and killed, and where the man who shot and killed was, there they let a relative of the shot and killed man stand. If he shoots

17 Oslo Etn. Mus. — Bodding.

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

682 and kills the man who shot and killed from there with one arrow, well and good; otherwise he is set free. And if a man is killed by an arrow passing through an animal, then, in the same way, they let some animal stand, and let the man who shot and killed stand behind the animal, so far away from the animal as the killed one was. If shooting through the animal placed there he kills him, well and good; otherwise he is free.

178 684 A man who has been robbed of his wife may, without any judgement, kill both on the spot, anywhere he may track and find the two, like a deer in the forest. His relatives will help him tracking them, but he himself will do the killing. Nowadays they do not kill them; but the seducer will have to pay five rupees to save his head.

Those who raped women they also treated in the same way. Also these have nowadays to pay five rupees to save their head, and besides this they fine them as heavily as they can. Mostly they make them pay a score of rupees. They cut off the right hand of a man who forcibly had applied sindur to a woman, and with a spindle they poked out one of his eyes. And there was a separate fine. Nowadays these also have to pay five rupees to save hand and eye; they get a beating and also have to pay a fine. We had no murder without a cause.

178 683 As to witches, formerly we drove them away after having treated them disgracefully; only now and then have we killed them. Also nowadays they drive them away, and sometimes they also kill them.

But this is not right, because the ancestors of old did not act in this way. If they were accidentally killed when they were beating them in anger, the ancestors of old did not call this murder; therefore they did not punish those who beat them to death.

178 684 Our punishment for illicit intercourse between relatives and with a person of another race was outcasting, and so it is now also. Nowadays this is also slackening off with us; some persons quite confidently act in this way; the people do not do them anything.

177 178 685 Formerly the Santals did not steal; but nowadays they have learnt this also from the Dekos. From former times only one kind of theft is remembered, viz., to steal and eat sheep or goats. When such animals had gone astray anywhere, then the whole village population would kill and eat them when they found them, and the village headman they would give a double share. If this was proved, they would then restore the head (give a fresh animal instead), and would fine them five four-anna bits each. Nowadays they take all to the smooth verandah (i. e., the courts).

178 682 Abortus provocatus we have had from old times. They were doing this when birth would be improper (on social indications). If it is proved, we fine both the medicine giver and the treated one ten rupees each. Nowadays we take such crimes to the courts. If they defame anybody without cause, they will have to pay five rupees to wipe off the defamation and five four-anna bits to the village council. The crime of sodomy is the act of drunk men only. Formerly we gave such men an awful thrashing and fined them ten

178 684

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

rupees. Nowadays who can say whether they take them to the courts or not? Besides this we have a couple of shameful sins that are not publicly mentioned. 178 684

When anyone has caused any loss, we make them pay the price or the estimated damage, and we also fine them. We fine both who strike each other, when both are guilty, otherwise one of them. If bullocks or cows butt and kill each other, we take the one who caused the death; and if anyone kills a bullock by ploughing or beating it, we make him pay its price. Anyone who falsely complains or makes a claim, him we punish contrarily. Those who without cause backbite people, we fine heavily. 685

A girl who commits the fault of mounting a tree in the sacred grove, or of entering the sacred closet in a man's house, will have to give a sacrifice animal. 688

When there is a dispute in connexion with the boundaries, the Pargana and the village headmen of the neighbourhood come together and settle the matter; and when there is a dispute in connexion with riceland, the village headman and the village council settle the matter. They fine the guilty person. These two kinds of mutual robbing have spread over the whole country through the instigation of the Dekos; otherwise formerly we had no such quarrels. Nowadays the Dekos also rob us of our villages; they both encroach on our boundaries and steal our riceland. People say: The Dekos enter like a needle, and they swell to be as large as a plough-share. They are also making us rob each other and quarrel. Where they are, there is no peace. Causing false evidence to be given in the courts, they rob us of all we have; and the magistrates do not understand our language; therefore we shall probably some day in the future again have to run away somewhere. If Deko cats were not living among Santals, it would be good for us Santals. 177 178 686 829

158

776 782 and we are quick to sacrifice to them. We give them fowls twice every year, at rice planting and harvesting. When we sacrifice to them, there is no magic square, there is no sindur either, nor is there any religious abstinence, and the invocation is only a few words; we say to them: Beware then, so and so's Boundary bonga, look here, I am giving thee, handing thee in the name of harvesting (or planting); may there be no sudden fear, no sudden alarm. Except women all eat the sacrifice. People say, it is told, that if only you of the family eat, or if you take anything home, then the boundary bongas will enter the house and exterminate the whole family of that house.

• 777 776 These are our real annual festivals and offerings. On the last day of the month of Aghăr we have a kind of festival, called sahar lupḍal[1]: we press cakes and eat them; but we make no sacrifices. From the Dekos we have from time to time taken over many festivals; but among these there is only one festival that we, the whole village celebrate, viz., the Karam[2]. At that time we offer belaṅja flowers[3], sun-dried paddy, dhubi grass, oil, and sindur to Kărmu and Dhărmu, and on the karam branch we put, as a screen, a piece of cloth two cubits long. At other festivals taken from the Dekos only the man who celebrates it, worships, and we go to look at it; we do not worship. At the Durga festival such people offer to Durga, at the Kali festival they offer to Kali, at the Monsa festival they offer to Monsa, at the Chata festival they offer to the Chata bongas, at the Pata festival they offer to Mahadeb, and at the Jatra festival they offer to Hansih, the Jatra bonga. But as these festivals do not belong to us, Santals do not act rightly offering to the bongas of other races. On account of this our bongas are angry with us; it becomes like the state of having a wife and a co-wife, we are not making anybody satisfied. We have got much confusion in connexion with the bongas. You Europeans have only one bonga; you are very fortunate, because you worship the Thakur, who has made us.

776 782 To the Jom sim we do not sacrifice every year, only now and then. To the Sin (sun or day) bongas we offer one goat, and to the Jom sim bongas we offer one goat or a ram on that occasion. The invocation is not different; only at the end we say to the Sin bongas: We are not able to do this every year, do not therefore take offence, be displeased.

776 753 Our ancestors of old have left us a word, viz.: Once in your life, somehow or other, do sacrifice to the Sin bongas, even when you are poor, and when you have the means, do sacrifice to him every fifth or sixth year, otherwise he will not call you good in the next world. In the primeval age they were offering only to the Sin bongas; the Jom sim bongas they have added afterwards. Since we have got venereal disease from the Dekos, we make vows to the Sin bongas to be cured from it; this they call "pair offering". They say, it

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[1] The meaning of this expression is uncertain; sahar is regularly used about dung, especially cow-dung, and lupḍa (or lupḍal) about rubbing, plastering with cow-dung. One might therefore be tempted to take it as meaning renovation after the ravages of the rainy season. [2] See Dictionary s. v. [3] Cassia auriculata, Roxb.

B Mukherjea O, Y-1, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42

Here they cast aside many of the customs of their forefathers, but no explanation is forthcoming at this date as to why they did so. Henceforth, their customs resembled those of the Hindus more and more. We learn that in ancient times, the Santal forefathers did not burn their dead, nor did they carry the bones of the dead men to the Damodar river for being consigned in its holy water. Previously, they buried the dead men. But all these were changed here. In marriage, the Hindu custom of applying vermilion to the forehead of the bride was henceforth adopted.

Next, the early Santals came to Icàk' buṭà (under the shade of a tree named Icàk'). As the womenfolk crossed the bog and gathered under a *màhua* tree they were struck with wonder to find that the lotus-leaves they had trodden under their feet and the marks of *arta* (equivalent to Hindu *alta*, a red pigment applied by the Hindu women to dye the sides of their feet) were absolutely undisturbed and intact. From this strange phenomenon they were convinced that they had done the right thing in changing the customs and resolved that they should henceforth stick to the changes.

The early Santals lived at Icàk' buṭà for a long time. But, as before, they migrated. The reasons are again uncertain, some ascribing it to the fear of the Turuks. As they were passing on, they found

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

173 a grassy field called Bàri badwak' [Dr. Campbell says that it means a common grass. (*Panicum Colonum*, [262] Ln.). The seeds are eaten during scarcity of food]. Then they crossed a forest and found themselves on the plains of Jona Jòspur. From this place they came over to Khàspal Belaoñja.

Here, they scattered themselves in many directions as they chose. Some went to Sir, some to Sikhàr, while others to Nagpur. Thenceforward, [177] [648] the Santals were, to a greater extent, under Deko (non-Santal) influence. They could preserve their independence only by contracting matrimonial alliances with the Hindus. They are no longer called 101 173 Kharwars. Here an explanation as to why they are called Santals, is forthcoming; for there are some who say that as they lived for some time in the country of Sànt,[1] beyond Sikhàr, they are called Sanotar[2] (*Santal*).

1. Sant = The Santals of Mayurbhanj according to the [175] Census report of 1931, were called Kherwals or Kherwars (Santals Puritan) before they settled in the country round about a place called Saont in Midnapur. P. 151. Risley (*People of India*, App. VIII) says that Santals ruled here for 200 years.

2. From Saont, Risley adds, "Again pressed by the [177] [648] [167] Hindus, they wandered on under a Raja called Hambir Singh to the eastern part of the Manbhum district near Pachet. Here after a while their Rajas adopted the Hindu religion and set up as Rajputs, so that at the present day they intermarry with the family of the Raja of Surguja.

B Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Here the Santals became the tenants of the king of Sikhàr but we hear that the Dekos seized their lands and property and drove them away. It is at Sikhàr that the Santals learnt how to observe the *Chatapùrùb*[1] (one of Santal festivals). From Sikhàr some of the Santals came to Ṭundi near Dhanbad.

The Santals regard stability as the biggest of their tribal problems. Their forefathers exhorted upon them not to cross the river Ajoy, but they had to go against their wishes for the sake of bread. And in course of time they have found themselves in the Santal Parganas. With a characteristic naiveté, the Santals say that like the caterpillars

But the people would not change their religion, so they left their chief to rule over the Hindus, and wandered on to the Santal Parganas where they are settled now."

People of India, App. VIII, pages clviii-clix. Risley has some reflections on the origin of the name "Santal." He says that according to Mr. Skrefsrud it is a corruption from "Saontar" and was adopted by them after their sojourn for several generations in the country about Saont in Midnapur. "Before they went to Saont they were said to have been called Kharwar, the root of which, *khar* is a variant of *hòr*, 'man', the name which all Santals use among themselves. Col. Dalton expressed a doubt whether the name of the place may not have been taken from the tribe, "a doubt strengthened by the discovery of a small tribe of Saonts in Surguja and Keonjhar." Risley does not think the point of importance as the Santal always now calls himself "mañjhi."

1. Chata-pùrùb = Observed in Mayurbhanj on the 12th day (Dwadasi) before the Bhadra Purnima (full-moon in the month of Bhadra, Aug-Sept).

Jit Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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to be the most prominent. Any one glancing through a Santali dictionary will be struck with the vocabulary bodily assimilated by the Santals from the current dialects of Bengal, and any one listening even to their folk-songs will notice that a large number of them are really in Bengali. We marked it even in the heart of Santalia, the Santal Parganas, when we heard a Santal woman humming, "Panch takar ghati bati chore laia gela" (*My pots and bowls worth rupees five have been stolen by thieves.*)[1]

Santali itself is a peculiarly expressive language so far as natural objects and things concerning the common life of agriculturists. But when it comes to the expression of things spiritual or the common ideas of modern civilization, it has got to fall back on the speech of the neighbours.

It is not, however, a written language and their traditional legends are orally handed down. The question of a Santal script engaged the attention of the early European Missionaries and they used the Roman script. It is due to their efforts that a large number of books have been written in the Roman script and the education imparted to Santals in the

1 The missionary in charge of the Dharampur district (S. P.) tells a story that while he was there, with his wife, a Santal tried to explain that it was useless for them to teach Santali, as they knew the language well enough and pressed for Bengali or Hindi. (*Annual Report of the Santal Mission of Northern Churches* 1934).

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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212 Santal Parganas has been through its medium. Side
• 197 by side with the Roman script, the Bengali script has been used by some Santals in their publications notably by Raghunath Mañjhi of Rainrangpur, Mayurbhanj, in his collection of Santal Folk-songs, and by the Hindu Mission, Rajmahal, in their Santal literature. Some in the Mayurbhanj State have, however, adopted the Oriya script for Santali. While at present these three scripts are claiming for mastery, an attempt was made by Raghunath Mañjhi a school-master, mentioned above, to introduce a script which he himself invented. The script was shown to us by its author and it is understood that a section at least of Santal opinion advocated its acceptance, while others were of opinion that a fourth would lead to confusion, there being already too many in the field.

191 Undoubtedly for facilities of social intercourse with the '*Deko*' (*non-Santal*) world, most of the Santals are bi-lingual. One can notice them speaking a broken Bengali in the Santal Parganas and Oriya in Mayurbhanj ; and during our investigations about the Santals in the latter state, we found them following Bengali remarkably well. The Santals residing
[177] in the heart of Bengal, speak Bengali fluently enough,
[184] and some, as in the small colony of Santals in Chinsurah, Hughly, are perilously near forgetting their tribal manners and customs.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Social Environment

In the Santal tracts mentioned above, they live side by side with the general population and although Santal hamlets are separate affairs, they cannot be said to be cut off from the rest of the world. The times are gone when the Santals receded into the back-woods to live in their old world of songs, dances and drinks. The most potent of the outside influences is the Christian missionary. Throughout the Santal Parganas and other places these missions are scattered. They educate the Santal in rudiments of modern knowledge, treat him, when ill, in hospitals of their own and look after the lepers in leper colonies. The Missionaries confess that they are out to preach and teach the Gospel of Salvation in Jesus Christ, but the indirect result of their educational activities can easily be seen in a changed angle of vision in the tribe.

Secondly, in some places, notably in Rajmahal and Dinajpur, Hindu Missions have opened their branches. These organisations seek to 'reclaim' the aboriginal to the Hindu fold, acting on the theory that the Santals are already Hindus as they follow a religion of Hindusthan. The religious workers of these institutions, who style themselves as "Missionaries,"—a novel feature no doubt—try to infuse into the Santal ideals of clean living, eating pure food and thus gradually win them over to worship the Hindu

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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gods and call themselves Hindus. We, for our part, have seen many of these reclaimed Santals, (and it was claimed by the authorities of the Hindu Mission that they succeeded in reclaiming a lakh of people within a short time in the Santal Parganas)... a procession of white-robed Santals wearing Hindu dresses, carrying tall sticks and anointed with sandal-pastes. Some of them carried drums and flutes while going to offer pujas to the Goddess Durga, cheek by jowl with the Hindus.'

For our part, we think that the task of the Hindu Mission is an easier one when we remember that 586,499 persons were found to be Hindu Santals in Bihar and Orissa in the census report of 1931, and in the Mayurbhanj State 254,596 persons returned themselves as Hindu Santals in the last census. It is also worthy of note that the Mayurbhanj State has always shown eagerness to extend to the Santals all privileges open to others. Cow-killing is prohibited within the State, and how far Hindu ideas have penetrated into Santal society will be apparent even to a casual observer.

Added to these, it must be remembered that the Santals do not live in water-tight compartments of their own, although their hamlets are separate from the rest. The Hindu "Kamar" does work for them,

1 The Hindu Mission in Bihar and Orissa came into existence in 1925.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4.5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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The Hindu "Kamar" does work for them, the "Kumhars" make their pots and plates, the "Tantis" weave their clothes and some other depressed class Hindus mostly live within their localities. The influence of the Hindus living nearby saturates the thoughts and ideas of the Santals, and when we remember that ethnologically many of these Hindus were aboriginals in origin, we can find out the reasons why many Santals are really anxious to describe themselves as Hindus like their neighbours. In their rural settlements, one can find the Santals joining the worship of the Hindu gods and goddesses like Durga, Kali and Mahadev. Like the rest of the Hindus, they salute these deities and the entire tribe dance and amuse themselves during these ceremonies.

Population

A recent worker on the Tribal Demography in India[1] regrets that the data on the tribals are the most inaccurate of all gathered together in Census reports. The net effect, he says, is to understate the number of tribals and correspondingly to overstate the number of other groups.

I. Singh, in his *Development and Adibasis*, in Asian Labour, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan. 1950) says, "Adibasis...number not less than 30 millions accord-

1 *Tribal Demography in India* by C. B. Mamoria, p. 24.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

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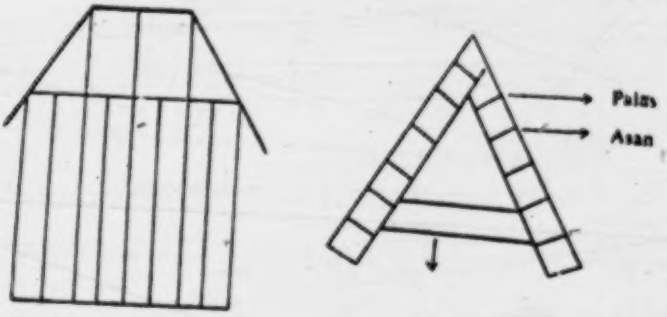
In the enclosed diagram, we have shown a usual 'egara panchi' (*eleven by five cubits*) house. This is the orthodox model, much in favour, and consists of nine poles of "Sal" (*Shorea Robusta*) fixed on the ground. Three of them are fixed at the either side of the cottage and three go to support the roof, standing just in the middle. The poles on either side, "anatang khunti" (*side-posts*) measure four cubits each ; whereas, those in the middle, are called "mutul khunti" (*middle-posts*). The roofs of such cottages slope on both sides.



Egara Panchi House,
Mayurbhanj

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There are of course wealthy Santals, who have imitated their Hindu neighbours so fully in their manners and customs, that in their house-building, there is nothing of their own. We saw some such huge structures at Tentulbati, now rendered into piles of mud, as the inmates had fled owing,

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

342 it was told, to the depredations of evil-spirits. And
556 even brick-built houses like those of the rich land-
177 owners of Orissa caught our attention at Tikari-
para, Mayurbhanj, with surrounding walls of brick that one cannot usually associate with Santal life,[1] except in their absence of windows.

342 Windows Santals will never have. "O, the
776 Boṅgas," will again be the answer if you question them on the point. The Santal dog, who snarls at
[231] the chance passer-by, and is treated and fed like a member of the family, keeps an all-night vigil. If
[574] you call for a Santal at mid-night, it may be he may greet you with an arrow, for he thinks that "Boṅgas" take human shapes and lure away men and women.

353 Santal walls are the beauty-spots of the hamlet. Here the inner artistic craving of the primitive tribe has displayed itself in a realm of phantasy. In some places, we saw the walls painted with a variety of colours, white, yellow, black, red and chocolate; sometimes with one colour and sometimes with alternate stripes, again with queer patches of triangles and rectangles. (See illustrations). Various pictures, associated with Santal life, sometimes greet your eyes. Here is a Brobdingnagian deity aiming a shaft at a

1 This was the house of Chandramohan Murmu of Tikaripara, Bamanghati, Mayurbhanj. Its dimensions were measured to be 50 by 20 cubits.

3i Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Santal food. "A Santal will manage to live where even a rat would starve," said a Missionary to Man more than seventy[1] years ago ; and wandering in the Santal lands we heard comments, "O, they will eat anything that flies except aeroplanes and anything that swims except boats."

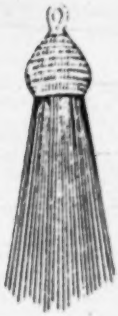
They eat almost all the available kinds of fish and crabs and have a great relish for meat, which they preserve in a way of their own. We saw at the house of Sham Màrndi, a village Chowkidar, that a pig sacrificed during the June sowing festival was being cut to pieces, and learnt that these would be dried in the sun for three days after being mixed with salt. At the time of cooking, these pieces, soaked in water and mixed with salt and turmeric, would be placed on ovens in earthen pots. The Santal would fry the whole with "mohua" oil if available, and thereafter mix it with water and boil it for half an hour, chillies broken to pieces being added to improve the taste. Fowl is a luxury to be eaten on festive occasions and when a guest arrives in the house. It is cooked in a similar process. With an embarrassed look the Santals confessed that they eat carrion, but added that they cook it in an outer house, which implied that under the influence of Hindus they have come to look upon it as a pollution.

1 Ref. Man, *Sonthalia and the Sonthals.*

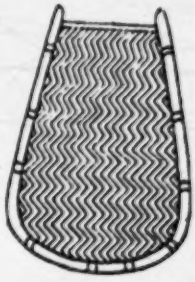
3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Baskets of different shapes and sizes, made of bamboos arrest one's attention in a Santal household. One of them, called "uduli," is used by women while marketing and carrying things to the field. (See illustration). They have their own winnowing fan called "hata" and use a basket named "gauni" for measuring paddy. The broom-sticks are neatly made of "kancho" (*Oriya*) reeds (Santali, *K'harang*). (See illustration).

Uduli



Jana



Hata

Industries

As far as cottage-industries are concerned, we did not find spinning and weaving a part of the serious programme of the Santals, as they depend on the neighbouring Hindu weavers to supply their clothes. However, in most houses, they possess these wheels and the indigenous ginning machine, which implies,

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

735 sorrows. It is a pathetic sight to see young Santals
293 keep sober till they marry, and then grow old sud-
154 denly as cares and anxieties of life come to them, when they plunge headlong in a sodden life.

181 The rigours of their life on the earth are somewhat overcome by the objects of material culture we have noted in the foregoing pages. But one can easily see that they are crude devices of a primitive world, not serving their purpose well in the [171] twentieth century. But, one must however notice that the level of culture presented by the Santal is on a par with that of the rest of the hill tribes of what may be called the Central Belt of India, which is a homogeneous culture-area in all important respects.

Conclusion

194 As we conclude the review of Santal economic
181 life, we find that the actual stage reached by the
224 tribe in its material culture is still primitive. Their
241 traditions make it clear that there was a time in the
433 life of the Santals when they lived a semi-hunting nomadic life, perpetually moving in quest of food. But the picture we have got in the foregoing pages reveals a people who have finally accepted the life of settled agriculturists.

• 177 As, however, we look closely to the objects of Santal material culture, we notice similarities with

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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other tribes resident in the areas. It is a very difficult but fascinating task to find out which of them are typically Santal and which borrowed, as culture-loans from the neighbouring tribes, either Muṇḍà or hinduised Aboriginals.

This material aspect of Santal life is indissolubly linked up with its religious and clan features. We shall see in the forthcoming pages how the Santals invoke their gods to bless them with bumper-crops, how they seek protection for their hunting-dogs and cattle from the attack of wild animals by prayers to the deities. Thus the communal worship of the tribe has for its object the securing of good luck and avoiding bad luck for the tribe as its material background.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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But we should add that although in theory, Santals can marry anyone belonging to their *Bòndhu Peṛas*, various restrictions now hedge them round. Added to these, certain consanguinous relationships (presumably under the influence of the Hindus) have added several prohibited degrees of marriage. Thus we see that they have no cross-cousin marriage, that is, the children of a brother and sister cannot marry. The children of two sisters, although belonging to different clans cannot enter into matrimony as *Balaea* (relationship subsisting between the parents of a married couple) relationship is prohibited between brothers and sisters according to custom. The marriage of a Santal with the widow of a maternal uncle, although a *Bòndhu* woman, is unthinkable, and the Santals of Barsai, Mayurbhanj, went so far as to place the *mami* (the wife of a maternal uncle) in the category of a mother. It will thus be clear from the foregoing that while the matrimonial rules are based primarily on the basis of exogamous clans, degrees of relationship have at least their secondary importance.

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Relationship Terms

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We give below a list of Santal kinship terms as obtained from Mayurbhanj. The system is mainly of the type named by Morgan as 'Classificatory,' which generally recognises relationships between

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CHAPTER VI

TRIBAL POLITY

The expression 'polity' amongst Santals may sound paradoxical enough, but we can perhaps observe without fear of contradiction that as one studies the elements of Santal tribal government, one must wonder if one is not face to face with the essence of democracy and about to discover here a government of the people, for the people, by the people. This feature of the Santal impressed a recent Deputy Commissioner[1] of the Santal Parganas so much that he re-shuffled the Santal assemblies to suit modern conditions for a better and a more natural administration of justice and government. This reversion to the good old days was not, what might be called a success; the reasons were various: but all of them when analysed will lead to one conclusion only, the want of education and again the want of education, and not perhaps to any inherent defect of the constitution of the tribal assemblies.

We propose to examine in this chapter the mechanism of the Santal system of tribal govern-

1. Mr. Hoernle, I. C. S., Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas (1927-32).

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428 of any claim to a portion, as we shall see in detail later on. The father steps into the shoes of his childless son; and the line of devolution next descends to the brothers (in the absence of the father), and thereafter to the male agnates. In case even agnates are wanting in the chain of succession, the turn comes to the daughter in trust for her children. The widow, as such, has no rights even of maintenance, but if she has minor children, she can manage the property till the sons attain majority and receive their shares. A widow who marries again, receives nothing; and the male agnates manage the property till the children come of age.

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Santal Customary Law at Mayurbhanj

Customary law of the Santal has been thoroughly affected by Hindu law in the Mayurbhanj State. This struck us while we were at Muruda when in answer to our question as to the daughter's rights of inheritance, a woman answered that should a Santal householder die without leaving male issues, the daughter will succeed in preference to all agnates. Questioned about the widow's rights of inheritance, she replied that should a Santal die leaving his wife and separated brothers of the full blood, the widow inherits everything of her husband's share. We write this to show how the principles of Hindu law of *Mitakshòra* branch have

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permeated the Santal mind. As a result, through disuse, the Santal has well nigh forgotten his old tribal law governing the disposal of property, real or personal. On closer enquiries from local lawyers we understood that the courts have uniformly upheld *Mitakshòra* Hindu Law as governing the Santal,[1] both as substantive law and as principles of justice, equity and good conscience. A pleader[1] who handled the largest number of Santal clients told us that in his experience, the Santal has seldom tried to plead his personal tribal law. The only case he knew was decided at Panchpir about the year 1928, when local custom to the exclusion of daughter's rights of inheritance was seriously pleaded by the defendant agnate alleging *inter alia* that the daughter is not entitled according to tribal custom to offer *pindas* to her parents which only could constitute her right to property. But the evidence adduced in support of the custom was found insufficient, not ancient and invariable, a difficult proposition for a Santal to establish, and the court allowed the daughter's rights of inheritance on principles of equity. This case, said the pleader, was rather in the nature of an exception proving the rule that the Santal does not seriously plead his tribal custom in

1. Mr. Paresh Ch. Bose, pleader, Baripada.

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428 177 [67] [692] lawsuits, and even if he does rarely, he fails miserably to establish it.

So in the domain of partition and inheritance, we find that the sons share equally, the daughter succeeds when there is no son to the man who dies. The widowed mother has her rights of maintenance recognised at the hands of her sons. The sonless widow becomes the sole proprietor, and like the *Mitakshòra* widow, cannot alienate property without legal necessity.

Adoption (Pushapo)

597 The Santal who has no son can adopt a son in Mayurbhanj. The adopted son is generally a relation and rarely unrelated. The adoption is made in the presence of the Headman and the Panchayet. Now, occasionally, proceedings are recorded in writing, but previously everything was oral. The devolution of [179] [428] property follows the *Mitakshòra* branch of Hindu law.

Ghar-Jamai

428 184 606 As in the Santal Parganas, the Santals of Mayurbhanj have the custom of providing for their daughters through the institution known as "domesticated son-in-law" (Ghar Janwane or Ghardi Janwane: there is however a subtle difference between the two). His rights here are essentially the same as 428 606 in S. P. So if there be a son, and such a son-in-law

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to a man, on the death of the man, such a domesticated daughter's husband has no rights. If a Santal dies leaving such a son-in-law who again loses his wife, the property goes to the agnates of his father-in-law. 428 606

Partition

Partitions, in Mayurbhanj, follow the *Mitakshòra* branch of Hindu law, but the parties to a partition, in most cases, voluntarily allow a bigger share to the eldest brother or to his heirs, as *Iyasthangshò* (the share of the eldest brother). 428 [777]

Legal status of Santal women 562

In Mayurbhanj: The legal status enjoyed by Santal women in Mayurbhanj can be described as follows:—

(1) If a married man has no child, he can marry again according to Santal customary law. Bride-price is paid in both cases. [587] [583]

(2) If a man has more than one wife, even if some of them might be called *rakhni* (mistress, lit. a kept woman) they inherit equally. [595] [428]

(3) A man can marry as many wives as he likes, but a woman cannot have more than one husband at a time. [595]

(4) *Punchayets* as well as law-courts will give relief to the wife, even if called "*rakhni*," who is deserted by her husband or not given maintenance. [586] [736]

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562 178 are observed in practice to exercise a position in the domestic life, which rightfully belongs to the housewife in the western sense of the term. Moreover, [177] education, contact with the liberalising tendencies of the west filtered through the Missionaries and of the *Dekos* (non-Santals), have to a large extent softened the rigidity of old tribal laws to more and more advanced ideals.

583 The pivot of the woman's existence, according to the Santal, depends on her marriage. But to marry her one must buy her with a price. This bride-price, *Gònòn*, as the Santal calls it, is as essential in a Santal marriage as the *Saptapadi* is to the Hindu, or the eating together from the same plate to the Burmese. So the legal corollary is that the husband is the 'owner' of his wife as a parcel of property.

586 583 The courts present interesting cases of Santal divorce when the settlement of the bride-price becomes the most important factor in the decree. Should the woman be proved the guilty party, the bride-price has got to be returned to the injured husband. If the woman is proved on evidence to be erring, and adultery is proved against her, the co-respondent must pay a double *Gònòn* (bride-price) to the husband of the woman. But if the man is the offending party, his bride-price is forfeited.

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So as a chattel she belongs in her minority to her father, she is bought as such by her husband and when her coverture ceases on her husband's death, she reverts to her original owners. But if her father is dead and none of her original kinsmen kindly takes charge of her, she drifts as a piece of *res-nullius*, without any *locus standi* in the social life. 562

It is not strange, therefore, that having converted her into a piece of property, the tribal laws could not legally and logically bestow on her any rights to hold and own property, real or personal.

But as we have observed before, Santal tribal jurisprudence has changed and is still changing a great deal. In the domain of the ownership of personal properties, this improved position is the most perceptible. It is seen that now they can own money, cattle and goods. This ownership is completed legal right, for they have the power of disposing of these to whomsoever she pleases. She is not merely the trustee, as the Hindu widow is, with regard to her widow's estate. 562 177 178 422

It is frequently seen that when property is divided between the sons, a loving father will bestow on his daughter some heads of cattle or some pin-money, to be her personal property. Thus we find that the ornaments of the women are their own. They enjoy the fullest powers of disposal over them. But sometimes they are made to store family money. 428 562

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wing of the house serves the purpose. A midwife, a Santal woman of the profession, attends on the parturient woman with her elderly women-relatives. In cases of difficult delivery, *Ojhas* (exorcists) are summoned to perform rites so as to expel the ghosts, supposed to be creating difficulties.

When the child is born, the umbilical cord is severed by the midwife with a sharp iron weapon such as an arrow-blade. The baby is now bathed in tepid water and the navel-string buried near the main door of the room of its birth.

As regards ceremonial uncleanliness for the baby and its mother, the practice differs in different areas of Mayurbhanj. Some do not observe any segregation whatsoever; while others observe it for varying periods[1] from one to twenty-one days, during which they may not visit the room, touch the baby or its mother. The observance of this birth-pollution in some areas and its negation in others, throws a flood of light on the influence of others on their customs and manners. During her confinement, the mother is allowed to eat warm rice with salt, leaves of

1. On this point, Nabin Mañjhi, an old Santal said that custom requires that twelve days should be observed. But it has slackened and men now sometimes consider themselves ceremonially clean, immediately after a child-birth in the house.

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581 [589] like their loin cloth and *mòhua*, every one has a 'light' in his house.

With the abundant freedom in social intercourse such as these tribes enjoy, their marriages are generally 582 love-marriages. The proper age for marriage is now twenty years for the lad, and after puberty for the girl in Mayurbhanj. In the past, Santals married [177] adult (about their twenty-fifth year) to men or women of choice ; but now, undoubtedly due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindus, the age for matrimony has come down so as even to infringe the age of consent. Child-marriages are more frequent in Mayurbhanj. Brides, however, must be younger than the husbands but we cannot recall having seen or heard of a wife older than the husband.

595 The tribe does not favour polygamy, unless the wife is barren. The younger brother marries the widow of his elder brother to keep the family property intact. In Mayurbhanj, however, several instances of a man's subsidiary wives came to our knowledge, enjoying a status in law and in the society, exactly equal to their *Mitakshòra* sisters. No 595 instances of a polyandrous system could be directly 835 met with, bur the institution known as *Dhàulià Sagai*, which permits a younger brother to share his elder brother's wife with impunity, "only they must not go about it very openly," has puzzled the

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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when at dinner, and would give up his hunger-strike on proper assurances only. 585

Now, it is time for the go-between, *raebaric'*, who accompanied the couple all through, to drop off and the party returns to the bridegroom's home.

2. *Bàriàt Ate Bapla*

A second form of the orthodox marriage is named thus. The only difference from the previous ceremony here is that the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house with the bridegroom, when they bring the bride over to their own house, where the marriage takes place with all formalities of *Asli* marriage. The uncastrated goat is also taken to the house of the bride where it is offered to her immediate ancestors. [169]

3. *Tuńki Dipil*

Tuńki Dipil, also a variety of *Asli* marriage, is eminently suited to the poor. Here the betrothal party goes with the bride-price (*gònòń*) to the house of the bride, and brings her to the bridegroom's home, where the marriage is celebrated with all the attendant ceremonies of the orthodox marriage.

In the foregoing pages, we have marked the orthodox systems of Santal marriage, which have, in course of time, adapted themselves to the pre- [177]

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585 177 valent Hindu forms. Many of the ceremonials as the application of vermilion to the bride's forehead, have been traced directly to Hindu influences. 585 174 177 This *sindur dan* or *sindrà dan* is a remnant of the primitive custom of mixing the blood of the husband and wife, which they either drank or daubed themselves with, as a symbol of an eternal union. As it is a queer problem to discover whether the egg came first or the hen was first, ethnologists have in their turn, traced Dravidian influences in the custom. Similarly, the marriage with a *mòhua* [171] [588] tree, the race of the husband and wife while at the ceremony, called *Kado ghata*, have their parallel in the customs of the Hindus of the Central belt.

II. LOVE MARRIAGE

(1) Raja Raji

583 [834] The freedom of social intercourse that the Santals allow to their boys and girls, naturally leads to many love-marriages; but the Santals, even when in love, have to go through certain formalities 583 584 [622] before living as man and wife. So we see that when a couple feel the urge for matrimony, they go to the house of the village Headman and inform him of their desire. The Headman now will take them to the house of the lover and there, in the presence of the village elders, the beloved is asked

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585 182 783 want to purify the couple from the evil effects of chance pre-marital sex-connections (a rare phenomenon with educated Santals), thereby neutralising the dangers to the family and the tribe.

585 177 182 Many of these ceremonials are closely analogous to Hindu practices; and have probably been borrowed and are thus due to culture contact, although it is not improbable that the Hindus themselves might have at an early period assimilated some similar Pre-Dravidian practices. Whatever that may be, one must

585 182 771 notice that Santal marriages are closely associated with religion as is indicated by offering of vermilion to *Maran Burn* and a goat to the dead ancestors. Thus we find that marriage no longer remains a civil contract of getting a partner in life on payment of a price, but takes the form of a sacrament as well.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES

764 The Santals have their own funeral customs. When a death takes place in the tribe, the village Headman and the elders flock together at the house in mourning, when they rub the dead body with oil and turmeric. Now, the corpse is taken out of the house in a *khatia* (a stringed bed-stead), placed in the yard and cleansed with cow-dung and water. A handful of paddy is spread over the spot and some thrust into the right palm of the deceased and thrown down some time later. The bier is next

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most mysterious of all episodes in human life. He associates a death in the tribe as an event which necessitates segregation of the family and the clan visited by the calamity, and not until they undergo ceremonial purification, are they thought entitled to the fuller life of the tribe, and this re-union is effected by a final community meal.

In all these socio-religious rites, the whole Santal society of the locality acts like one man. Here is a supernatural danger visiting a family. Unless the full co-operation of the tribe is received, it may be an occasion for the unconscious contamination to injure the tribe itself by its mysterious infection. So the man affected by a death in the family looks up to the tribe for help and sympathy, and the tribe in its turn helps its members during the crisis, by propitiating the super-human powers beyond our ken, who alone know the key to the mysterious phenomena round about humanity.

It is very easy to notice here also, the undoubted influence of Hinduism in the funeral customs of the Santals. But, whereas the Hindus have universalised the individual with the eternal essence, and have woven a theory of universal humanity by offering *Pindas* even to the unknown dead, their formula being "*Jagaddhitaya Krishnaya*," (to Sri Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, for the good of the Universe), the Santal, although not dreaming

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76 of going so far, has, according to his own ideas,
177 sought to propitiate the departed spirit and his
619 ancestors by suitable libations in the interests of tribal solidarity, which is his first concern on earth.

182 This tribal unity under a rigid frame-work serves
619 the Santal as a bulwark against unforeseen dangers, supernatural powers, anti-social activities of the members of the tribe, and hosts of other malignant powers and influences. So it is that the tribe has built up a social organisation and customs intended to fuse the diverse elements into a homogeneous whole, and has, by appropriate rituals, ceremonials and libations, sought to establish a medium for communion with the invisible powers that guard their destinies.

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Thereafter, a special dish is cooked with meat and rice boiled together. All the Santals then dine at the *Jahèrthan*. But the meat of the fowls offered to Jahèr era and Mònrènko can be eaten by the Naeke (priest) alone. 796

On the second and third days of the festival, each house-holder sacrifices fowls to Abge Boṅga (the god of the Santal males), Oṛak' Boṅga (the Household deity), the Patriarchs of the tribe and Maraṅ Buru (the Chief Presiding Deity). Songs and dances *en masse* conclude the *Eròk' Sim*, the June sowing festival. [782]

Eròk' Sim, (mentioned also by Dr. Campbell and Risley) is observed all over by the Santals; but at Mayurbhanj, it passes under the more Hinduised name of *Asharia*. [184] [177]

Hàriàṛ Simko (July)[1] 796 782

The month of July sees the celebration of the *Hàriàṛ Simko*, when thanks are offered to the gods as the paddy appears green and there are indications of a good crop. A peculiar feature of the ceremonials is that the village deities alone are worshipped on this occasion, but the prayers offered are

1. This is the approximate time for this festival in the Santal Parganas. Risley is, however, disposed to place the *Hàriàṛ Sim* (the feast of the sprouting rice, as he calls it) in September-October (Bhadra). [114]

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796 614 [782] [252] then offered to the gods to protect the clan from earthly maladies, bowel-complaints being specially named as a dreaded disease. The meat, thereafter, is cooked with salt and water. The *Màrṇḍis* must eat the heads of the animals sacrificed and the rest goes to the share of the invited.

The *Baskes*, when questioned, said that they need not like *Màrṇḍis* start the festival before sunrise; any time before noon suits their clan calendar. [782] [252] Their sacrificial meat is cooked with turmeric, spices and salt, and their gods are similiar to those of the *Màrṇḍis*.

796 *Pata* (Santal *Còròk* in mid-April).

[177] We have seen from the foregoing that the Santals, in addition to their orthodox festivals, associate themselves with the various Hindu ceremonials like the *Durga Puja*, *Kali Puja* and others. [174] From the evidence at our disposal, one cannot be sure as to when they began their association, but as one looks to the *Pata*, the Santal version of Hindu *Còròk*, (Hook-swinging festival) it seems to be pretty old. In the chapter on *Bitlàbà* or Santal social ostracism, we noticed that the final trial of the offenders takes place on *Pata cando*, meaning the month of *Còròk*, and the orthodox meaning of the word *Pata* is stated to be "a festival in honour of *Mahadeo*."

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CHAPTER IX

RELIGION OF THE SANTALS

Santal Deities and Spirits

In course of the previous chapters, we have come across the names of various deities and spirits that the Santals propitiate during their festivals or at their private worships. We intend now to take them one by one so that we may discuss about their nature.

Supreme Deity (Thàkur Jiu, Siñ Boñga or Dhòròm)

While discussing the Santal theory of Creation, we have already familiarised the reader with Thàkur Jiu, who created this world. This religion of a faineant supreme deity struck Rev. Skrefsrud and other ethnographers, as being a theological conception behind their spiritual ideas. We have already hinted that we questioned the Santals of Mayurbhanj closely on the point. There were some who were ready to identify him with God, the only one and no second, but hundreds of Santals remained dumb-founded when asked to say if their "Dhòròm" is shapeless. As one goes deeper, one finds oneself in a bog. The educated Santals, living under Hindu influence, will readily identify their Supreme

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776 [179] Deity with the Hindu idea in the Upanishads, whereas the Christian Santals will attribute to him Biblical ideas. One thing however is clear. The Santal does not yet bother very much about the Supreme Deity, as he is too good to interfere with men, and is a passive deity after all. There are others, who identify Ṭhàkur Jiu of the traditions with Siñ Boñga, the Sun-god, worshipped every tenth year by the Santals ; but the concept of Supreme Deity can only, with difficulty, be associated with him.

[114] Risley doubts whether a Hindu name "Ṭhàkur" can form a part of the original system of Santals, and his exercise of supreme powers leads him (Risley) to associate the deity with a later stage of theological development. But when everything is said, the fact remains that the Santal of the modern times is not a fetish-worshipper and whether his present belief is borrowed from Hinduism or not, it cannot be dogmatically asserted any more that the Santal has no God, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer in his pantheon.

Village Spirits

The Santals have several village spirits, whom they worship during all public festivals. They are supposed to preside over particular rural areas in which they live.

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771 worship of the *Pitris*. That is a religion not of
769 undiluted fear in the presence of the mysterious powers of the dark.

771 The very name of the Supreme Deity connotes
[776] a moral order of things. In ancestor-worship, in endearing terms of primary human-relationships as "Basumata," we find something that removes the Santals steps higher than the animists. That emotion and thrill play a conspicuous part in the religious practices of the Santals, cannot for a moment be doubted by the person who has observed them with an eye to see. It may be that they
• [777] have borrowed these from the Hindus. But even as Pre-Dravidian practices have been digested and assimilated beyond recognition by the Hindus, these ideas, even if borrowed, have been for a long time past, the religious life and blood of the tribe.

So it is that the latest Census reports have given up the term 'Animism' in describing the religion of the Santals, and for want of a better expression we should characterise it as "Spiritism" a term used by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, in designating the religion of the Khaṛias, a Muṇḍa tribe.

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791 and is then called a "Jan-Guru". As regards
776 the second method, it is stated that there are several
[787] *Guru Boṅgas*. The man who is devoted to them and has faith on them sees them coming to him in dreams. He then knows that the *Boṅgas* are pleased
[782] with him and want his worship. If the pupil likes it, he offers vermilion and *dhup* (incense) in the names of the *Boṅgas*, he saw in his dream. The *Boṅgas* again appear before him in dreams and tell him of their powers and ask him to worship them. With the series of *Boṅgas* thus appearing before him, the pupil becomes *Koñka* (puzzled). He then goes to the *Boṅgathans* (the places where the *Boṅgas* live) and remains there for some days. He talks with the spirits and they assure him that whenever he remembers them, they will be at his beck and call and tell him whatever he wants to know. Thus getting his boon, the pupil returns home and continues to worship the *Boṅgas* and practise his power.

Conclusion

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[171] Magic and witch-craft are an essential part of the belief of most of the Hinduised tribes and the pre-Dravidian people resident in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Although it cannot be vouched for a
[177] certainty as to whether the Santals borrowed it
[174] wholesale from the Hindus, there is some internal

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evidence showing the influence of Hindu ideas on Santal magical practices. In the race of life, the Santal finds inexplicable super-normal phenomena. He does not know how to react to the unknown and unknowable; so he has recourse to magic to deal with the impersonal forces and energies through appropriate rites and spells. This is done not by all the Santals, but only by the *Ojha*, a specialist in the art of magic and witch-craft. And he is generally the common doctor for all the Hinduised tribes and the Muṇḍà people. What the witch-doctor does is to practise the art of dissociating himself with the aim of spirit-communication, when he chants some magic formulae and makes the patent gestures while he performs the time-honoured rites to conjure the spirits. All these he does with the aid of some spirits, and although his mission is like the priest of religion to attain curative results that endure to the benefit of Santals individually or the tribe taken as a whole, it cannot be said that anti-social results do not follow due to the activities of some malignant *Ojhas* out to wreak personal vengeance on their enemies with the aid of malevolent spirits.

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It is not generally known that the Santals have elaborate song-cycles for festive occasions like the *Sohrae* (the December Harvest Home), the *Baha* (the Spring Festival), the *Pata* (the Santal Cọṛòk or Hook-swinging festival) and marriages. Over and above these, the sowing of the seed and the various stages of the different harvests are celebrated with special songs by the men and women of the tribe, amidst tribal dances and ceremonies. All these songs have their own tunes as the orthodox Hindu music, although Bengali songs and Christian hymns are sung with as much gusto as their original folk-poetry. This was brought home to us once, when we accompanied Mr. Gurudas Sarkar, a Santali scholar belonging to the senior ranks of the Bengal Civil Service to a Santal village near Dumka, Santal Parganas. And imagine our surprise, when we found that one of their songs was about a Christian preaching his message in the *Kulhi* (village lane).

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Religious and Semi-religious Songs

We have seen before that the most famous Santal religious festival, the *Sohrae*, celebrates the December Harvest Home. A popular song of the festival is a duet between a husband and a wife.

[539]

Tune—*Sohrae*

Wife— Maraṅ buru sèndèra dò
Gòl gòltèm calak'a

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CHAPTER XII

THE SANTALS IN A CHANGING CIVILISATION

We have now drawn our rough account of the Santals to a close. Judged by modern civilised standards, it may at best appear to be the survey of primitive order of life. But little can the average reader understand how forces and ideas of the modern world have penetrated into the aboriginal tribal fabric. One has got to see for oneself the mass awakening in the renascent Central Belt of India where the Adibasis are seeking to revitalise pre-Dravidian culture and tradition.

This could not have been possible, had the aboriginal entirely lived in the dream-world of Community feasts, drinks, songs and dances. No longer does the average Santal want to retire into the backwoods with the advance of modernism, as knowledge and ideas of civilisation have filtered into the tribe both consciously and unconsciously.

We have already seen that the Indian aboriginals are no negligible factor in the social and political life of India. To imaginative eyes, they formed a colourful cross-section of our teeming population, whereas to the anthropologists, they continued for a long time as museum specimens to study the evolu-

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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871 1924-25 to 8,473 in 1938-39; i.e. on an average
162 it doubled in course of 15 years.

871 Although in all areas the progress was not the
162 same (in the Santal Parganas during this period the
184 number of pupils under instruction rose very slightly viz. 1428), there was an awareness of the position as evidenced by the fact that the Santal Parganas Enquiry Committee reviewing the position *vis-a-vis* Santal education began their work with the proposition, "The first essential of the aboriginal is more education" and lamented that there was not a single school for the 60,000 Paharias in the Damin Hills.

871 The British government did not neglect abori-
648 ginal education but they had no visible plan of
797 their own. This task was urgently taken up by
• 177 the missionaries, who along with their hospitals and social service units, ran aboriginal schools of their own. As a result of their social and spiritual programme, a very large number of these tribals were converted to Christianity which meant a change lock, stock and barrel, of aboriginal sets of values. Their souls were sought to be saved. But out
[539] emerged a type of English educated people who like our young Michael Madhusudan Dutta might have exclaimed in rapture:

> Long sunk in superstition's night
> By Sin and Satan driven,

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

I saw not—cared not for the light,
That leads the blind to heaven.

Such a disillusionment perhaps lay in the subconscious mind of an educated Santal lad of Mayurbhanj, who asked us pathetically, "Please tell me if we have any religion."

This should be studied in the background of deeper moorings in the heart of the Santals as a result of centuries of culture-contact with the rest of the population, mostly Hindus. We have already seen that these tribals have mostly lived not in watertight compartments, but cheek by jowl with the rest of the more civilised people of India. So slowly and imperceptibly, acculturation has been going on.

One carefully traversing through the Santal myths and tradition comes to the inevitable conclusion that for ages and ages they have tried to form a part of the Hindu society. Use of vermilion during marriage, wearing of *alta* marks on the feet of women, characterising the Supreme deity as Thakur Jiu, obeservance of festivals like Charak (Pata—the hook-swinging festival), the strange resemblance of some Santal dances with the *Rasa* dance as described in the Vishnu Purana, the singing of essentially Vaishnava songs during the *Sohrae*, the shouting of *Haribol* during marriage, funeral and other ceremonies, the worship of Durga in Mohul-

3s Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
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177 bani, Bara Palassy and Pipra areas of Santal Parganas, the special puja to Kali in the Dumka Subdivision, the assemblage *en masse* of the Santals in the past to sing and dance during Hindu festivals, have very deep implications that these are broad-based on a synthesis peculiar to Indian culture.

175 177 186 The infiltration made itself positively felt in the Santal Parganas in 1871, with variants repeated in 1942, when many Santals declared themselves as *Saja-bor* (the pure men) after eschewing fowls, pigs, and intoxicating liquor but taking to *Ganja* (hemp, *Canabis Sativa*) and tried to bring it on a line with Hindu practices. It led for a time to some social ferment and had also political repercussions. This [162] impact may be corroborated by a reference to the Census Report of 1931 when 586,499 Santals declared themselves as Hindus in Bihar and Orissa; and in the state of Mayurbhanj, 154,596 were returned as such. Added to these, there were movements for reclamation of the Santal to the Hindu fold, specially in Rajmahal, Balurghat and other areas. In 1936, it was claimed in the Santal [197] Parganas, that due to their very recent activities (of the Hindu Mission), about a lakh of Santals came to the Hindu fold. In those times, we have seen, the Santals came to the Durgasthan at Dumka, to worship the goddess in their own rights as Hindus. They would recall that in their traditions and insti-

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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They would recall that in their traditions and institutes it was clearly stated that the early Santals (known as *Kharwars* then) had helped Ram Chandra to win the battle of Lanka against Ravana. In huge Santal rallies (held to declare themselves as Hindus) such speeches were heard, "Sri Ram Chandra used bows and arrows as we do. Sri Krishna was dark like us and played on the lute and tended cattle as we do. Why are we not Hindus?. We are." One irresistibly felt that here was the heart-throb of the Santal for centuries.

All these synchronised with a new awakening amongst the educated and enlightened Santals which culminated in the formation of organisations to maintain their social and political interests. One such, the *Hor Malto Marang Sabha*, was formed as early as 1932 on the initiative of E. S. Hoernle, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas. In course of time, it exerted a real influence on the government and the tribal people. The part that it played in safeguarding the rights of Santal tenants of Monghyr in the Bihar Tenancy Act was a creditable one as it secured his right against the disposal of his holding to *mahajans*. Gradually, however, a political programme came to the fore and such a bias was noticeable in the Adibasi Mahasabha, soon to follow at Ranchi. It sought to unify, at least the Proto-Australoids like the Santals, Mundas, Kharias, the Ho etc. in a

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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common platform. They long for the development of their distinctive culture—a pre-Dravidian Jharkhand.

Now with Independence, and its concomitant adult franchise, things are undergoing a rapid transformation. The Santal, along with the other aboriginals, like his more civilised brethren has got to handle a ballot paper. They see that the more advanced Indians are trying to have a better standard of life and are rushing in for more and more of education, for amenities of life hitherto denied to the hill and jungle-folk. Development plans of the government, Community projects, programmes of tribal uplift are gradually throwing open to them roads, motor lorries, schools and fineries. Planes buzz over them, radios blare and torch lights flash. With all the glare of modernism in their eyes, is it a wonder that these aboriginals, so long living idyllic lives in the backwoods of songs and dances are puzzled at the threshold of a New World?

So long the seeds of a new order were in the air. Old sets of value now seemed disturbed. In Bolpur area, one could notice new house-types with windows and furniture, they lacked in the past. Santals were found chewing betels, drinking less and taking to milk and tea and cigarettes. Many have given up beef like the Hindus, even buffalo meat and pork have gone off their menu. The old Santal

3t Mukherjea O Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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The old Santal would not grow potato due to their conservative instincts even when Pontet asked them, now they grow it along with tomato. The women now wear mill-made saris and in the urban areas of Santal Parganas, they seem indistinguishable from their Hindu sisters, because in fairs and rallies, they generally dress alike. Some widows, it has been seen at Bolpur, dress themselves in white. It is interesting to hear that in some areas, there is lesser divorce. And due to the impact of new ideas women's right in inheritance is being slowly recognised by the state and the society through indirect legal fictions.

With ideas of reform in the atmosphere, some acting as disintegrating forces, others operating on a constructive basis, it was no surprise to us to come across a manifesto signed by some prominent educated Santals of Bengal and some parts of Bihar calling upon their brethren of Midnapore, Bankura, Manbhum, Singbhum and other areas to engage in social reforms for the maintenance of their tribal honour. It stated that the Santals had firmly resolved that:

1. No Santal, man or woman, should drink *Pochoi* (rice-beer) in shops as the tribe had been ruined by drink while the grog-shop owners and *mahajans* were becoming rich. Temperance would help the Santals financially.

3: Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

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2. Carrion should not be eaten. The signatories refer to this custom with feelings of shame.

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3. Santals should not dance or sing anywhere except in their houses or villages. The manifesto reminds the tribe that the Europeans, Hindusthanis, the eastern hill-tribes sing and dance, but they avoid the hill-sides and public places. The ancient Santals had no public dancing.

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4. Force should not be resorted to without reason as it slackens the marriage tie and gives rise to various vices.

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5. Santals should wear coarse cloth and their women should give up wearing glass-bangles.

During my last visit to Mayurbhanj, I found the air thick with these ideas, specially among the educated Santals and there was a noticeable tendency to give up dancing and singing in public. It became clear to us that aboriginal sets of value and philosophy of life were undergoing a perceptible change. Times are gone when the tribes joined with the rest of the population in their pujas and festivals as in the past. To a discerning eye, this ban has robbed the tribes of the *joie de vivre* to a great extent and the infiltration of political ideas plus a realisation of their rather poor economic life, has cast a pall of gloom even on the denizens of forests, hill-tops and wide expanses of laterite soil,

Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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177 [668]

the habitat of the hitherto happy and care-free children of nature.

The process has been continuing for some time past: but its speed has accelerated in recent times. The anthropologist sighs for the good old days. A Maharaja, with a preponderance of aboriginals in his state (before Independence) regretted to the author that something was out of tune with the aboriginals. This was before the liquidation of princely states. We are living in fast changing times. He has since lived to see at least one of his aboriginal subjects holding ministerial portfolios.

We cannot rightly evaluate the social and political changes brought about by the mighty forces at work, because, as the saying goes, the kettle does not seem to boil when stared at. Otherwise, seen from the angle of history with a long vision, things would seem to be revolutionary indeed.

Whither the aboriginals then? This brings us to the vexed question of Civilisation and the aboriginals. One of the paradoxes of modern times is that civilisation, as we understand the term, has been considered by some social thinkers, as a questionable blessing to the aboriginal. Others, who have not gone so far, have advised a very cautious approach in the programme of their uplift and reforms. They include Dr. Rivers, the late Sarat Chandra Roy, Dr. Hutton and many other eminent anthropologists.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Civilisation, according to them, carries the germs of their own destruction so far as the aboriginals are concerned. So we find that Dr. Rivers refers with regret to the depopulation of the native tribes of Oceania as they could not withstand the diseases of civilisation and adjust themselves to the social and economic changes that came in its train. He fears that the forcible suppression of the custom may ultimately lead to the total extinction of the tribe as happened to the Dayaks of Indonesia.

That there is a good deal of truth behind this opinion cannot be doubted for a moment. What is best for the tribes must be left to time, their choice and to the natural laws of absorption. The capacity, however, of taking kindly to factors of civilisation varies greatly with different tribes. But the Santal has one special feature in him that he has learnt to adjust himself to the influences of civilisation; and punishment for witchcraft murders and offering human sacrifices to deities, the wholesale application of Mitakshara law as the tribal personal law in Mayurbhanj, have not produced any noticeably adverse effect. But the Santals have been slowly brought up to the level of many of their neighbours.

But when everything has been said, the note of caution *vis-a-vis* the Santals and Civilisation, should be borne in mind by all reformers engaged in social

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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With a characteristic naiveté, the Santal Guru Kolean told Rev. Skrefsrud that, since the very beginning of things, the Santals were ever migrating "like caterpillars, advancing, grazing and eating". Although the tribe has accepted the life of settled agriculturists, the inner urge to perpetual movement towards the newer beauties that the earth can offer is wonderfully revealed, in the song quoted above, as an ever-present instinct in the heart and soul of the tribe.

Virgin Nature may thus claim herself to be "both law and impulse" to the Santals, and this throws some light on the frank, straightforward and essentially truthful nature of the tribe. And even the corroding influence of what is called 'civilisation' has not to any great extent robbed the people of their primary virtues. It is a tribute to humanity that the heart of the Santal is still sound.

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with. Some gave the age for male children at 6 to 7 years, while others were variously disposed and placed the age at 8, 10 and 11 years. The approximate age given for female children also varied from 8 to 14 years. At this period, boys and girls display signs of restiveness and want to frequent the dances, specially "Lagre", the moon-light mixed dance.

On attaining puberty, girls become very afraid of menstrual blood. But this dread has no particular superstition attached to it; it is merely the reaction of a mere girl to a strange physiological change in her system. An educated Santal told us that girls are asked to observe ceremonial uncleanliness for a period and required not to touch pitchers, nor are they allowed to enter places of worship. But this was not corroborated by others. This throws light on the influences of Hindu ideas and practices on the present-day Santals. Village-elders were definite that there is no ceremony whatsoever with puberty. While under menstruation, girls wear a *kupni* ("a narrow strip of cloth passing between the thighs, and stuck into a waist-string before and behind, to conceal the privy parts" – Dr. Campbell), but after three or four days, they cease wearing it. They can touch anything and no peculiar dress or sign is worn by girls to signify that they have attained puberty. The weight of evidence at our disposal

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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This is how a neglected maid sings:

Gai gupiko panja panja,
Gai gupiko bako dedèṛdò.
Kaḍa gupiko panja panja,
Kaḍa gupiko bako dedèṛdò.
Hape hapeniñ sakòm-lenge,
Hape hapeniñ sankha-lenge,
Ròhòṛ gàḍià ḍheńka leke giñ
koyok' nocòpe.

(Translated)

I ran after the cow-herd boy, he did not commit coitus with me.
I went after the buffalo-boy, he did not cohabit with me.
When I shall make ornaments for my wrists,
When I shall make shell-bracelets for my wrists,
I shall compel glances at me like the crane (ḍheńka) at dried-up ponds.

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Some old Santals of Baldiha, Mayurbhanj, were not however disposed to concede to the unmarried girl equal freedom in premarital sexual intercourse with the boys. This handicap on the girls is undoubtedly an influence of Hinduism on the tribe; it appears from the evidence that the original institution of the Santals placed no such restrictions. Whatever that may be, a sane admonition is now

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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[P.1]

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Santal Parganas is a district within Bhagalpur Division in Bihar, lying between 23° 40′ and 25° 18′ North latitude and between 86° 28′ and 87° 57′ East longitude. It is bounded on the north by the districts of Bhagalpur and Purnea, on the east by Malda, Murshidabad and Birbhum ; on the south by Burdwan and Manbhum ; and on the west by Hazaribagh, Monghyr and Bhagalpur. The principal range in the district is that of the Rajmahal Hills. They consist of a succession of hills, plateaus, valleys and ravines, the general elevation of which varies from 500 to 800 feet above sea level. A large portion of the range is included in the Daminikoh (the skirt of the hills). In the Santal parganas within the four subdivisions Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal, the Santals live in largest numbers. They live in Damin areas, where previously one could not enter without the permission of the Commissioner. The Santal living on the very tract of the Aryan overflooding Northern India (in fact very near the sacred triangular spot between Benares, Rajgir and Gaya which witnessed the phenomenal Upanishadic speculation of the days of Janak and the rise of Jainism and Buddhism) could not but have been influenced by these and in their turn must have considerably left their mark on the folk culture of Northern India. If there is any culture which still carries the impress of the underlying philosophic speculation and order of thought that was wide spread in India prior to the rise of the Dravidian culture, it was very likely the belief and

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42

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174 177 social order of the Pre-Dravidian Santals. In the Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian culture of India, the Santals rather than the Mundas or Hos of Chota Nagpur stand in the lime light. Similarly their contact with Dravidian culture which at one time was not at all confined to Southern India, is well proved from their neighbours, the Malers, who in language along with the Chota Nagpur Oraons speak a Dravidian 197 tongue. Linguistically the Santals belong to what has been called the westernmost peripheral representatives of what is the Hawaiian type family in the Pacific.

161 162 At the Census of 1931 they numbered over two and a half million. In Santal Parganas the number was 7,54,804, the rest was distributed over the other parts of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Assam. If we study the strength of the population of the Santal during the thirty years (1901 to 1931) in the two provinces, Bihar and Bengal combined, it can be seen that they have increased from 18,69,074 to 25,08,789 which represents an increase of over 33 percent in a single generation.

174 As regards the origin of the Santals it is very difficult to say anything definite. There are no authentic written records of their own. From the traditions, customs, language and physical features of Santals one can conjecture to a certain extent about their origin. On the basis of the above items several theories have been put forward to account for their origin. Revd. 3 n 114 Skrefsurd[1] has suggested that the Santals entered India 174 from the North West and first settled in the Punjab and then made their way to their present habitat at Chota Nagpur. But Colonel Dalton and Sir William Hunter[2],

1. Introduction to Grammar of Santali Language 1873.
2. Annals of Rural Bengal.
3. [Erratum: this should read "Rev." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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243 Before husking, the Santals treat the paddy in the following ways. First they soak the paddy in water by keeping in an earthern vessel for several hours, then they boil the soaked paddy. After boiling they spread the paddy on the courtyard for drying. They do not keep the paddy long in the sun because too much dried paddy will be brittle and during the time of husking the rice will break into pieces. After drying they store the paddy in baskets which they prepare with the strands of straw. Sometime they do it not by boiling but only drying in the sun. The paddy treated thus is husked either with a *"dhenki"* (husking machine) or with the pestle and mortar. To get clean rice the Santals husk the paddy more than once. Then with the winnowing fan they remove the husk separated from the grain.

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AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

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[177] **Plough** :—The Santals who live near the Bengal border or in low lands use generally the same type of plough which is used in Bengal, but the plough which is commonly used by the Santals is somewhat different from the Bengal plough.

The Santal plough consists of mainly, three parts, (*a*) the plough proper (nahel), (*b*) the plough beam (isi), (*c*) the yoke (arar).

The plough proper is made of a single piece of wood which is slightly curved forming an angle generally of 130° at its middle part where the body and the shoe meet each other. The handle (Karmba) which is four to six inches long and roughly circular in cross-section is not a separate piece of wood but simply a projected outward piece coming out from the body.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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(3) Mug (Phaseolus Mungo Linn.).
(4) Musuri (Lens esculanta Moench.).

262 263 252 The Santals prepare curry with different vegetables which they collect from the jungle or they produce in their own kitchen garden. Potato is rarely used by them. From the jungle they collect certain edible roots, leaves and mushrooms, and with them they prepare curry. Pumpkins, sweet potato, brinjals, jhinga, ladies finger, beans, radishes, and onions are used by the Santals for curry.

262 The Santals eat various types of fruits, the most common are the followings :- jack fruit, guava, plantain, black berry, tamarind, papaw, etc.

The Santals relish animal food very much. They eat the meat of almost all birds and animals with the exception of tiger, leopard, horse, monkey, dog, mole, eagle, hawk, some types of frog, elephant and cat. They are very fond of the meat of pig, young crow, mouse, and hare.

231 They kill pigs in the following way:-

252 They let out their dogs to catch a pig which runs hither and thither on being frightened. They then shoot arrows at the pig. When it falls on the ground, they strike it on its head with a big stone. After it dies, they burn it in the fire, and when all the hair of its body is burnt, they cut it into pieces and cook it.

252 Birds are similarly treated to remove the feathers.

262 Fishes are eaten mostly as curry. Now coming in

262 contact with the Hindus of the neighbouring areas, the

177 Santals have ceased to eat meat of many animals.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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174 witches. But the majority comprises of herbs and sometimes also minerals, leading one to suspect strongly the influence of Hindu indigeneous Kaviraji treatment which had been universally adopted (ancient Hindu medicinal treatises having been translated into Arabic and passed through it into mediaeval European pharmacopoeia). Thus for instance the use of Rasa-Sindur is distinctly Hindu, the word Rasa being the old Hindu word for a form of preparation of mercury. Similarly, some names such as Kababchini or tobacco-water show post-Mahomedan adoption.

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824 It may be mentioned here that there is a seasonal ceremonial called Ranjagao for the vitalising or blessing of medicinal plants in general, at the time of the autumnal Dasai parab. This has no reference to any special ingredients but increases the effectiveness of medicine in general. There are certain instructions given as to the time and mode.

757 The method of diagnosis, generally followed, is by feeling the pulse as amongst the Hindu Kavirajes.

[759] (b) **Tejo Theory**

753 The Santal calls in the Rarantic for diseases due to natural causes. But he also has a theory of disease which in his scientific viewpoint is as natural a cause as infection caused by bacteria. But we can look upon it as an agency which is natural and yet supernatural and sometimes also diffused with human agency. According to them diseases would be caused by a tejo which may be large or very miscroscopic. These tejos are located in different parts of the body, some at the root of the nose and some in different parts of the body.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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796 241 tied and vermilion with mustard oil painted. Friends come and go visiting one another, all (both male and female) more or less drunk and wild with excitement. [624] After all is over, the young people drink and eat in the house of the *jog-manjhi*.

[786] The other two days are for nothing but to enjoy life, merry-making going on in full swing with full sex license. For the five days and nights during which the festival lasts the Santals indulge in a veritable saturnalia giving themselves up to dancing, eating, drinking, singing and sexual license. Although this license does not allow adultery, nor does it sanction intercourse between persons of the same sept, yet if the latter offence is committed it is punished less severely than at other times.

796 **Sakrat Festival.** After this another festival known as *Sakrat* takes place on the last day of the month of [177] [226] Pous (December and January). This is an imitation of the Hindu *Pous Sankranti* festival. The Santals (only males) go out fishing to the streamlet a day before the actual festival. From the morning of that day the [262] women are busy preparing cakes of parched rice. The men folk eat curd and parched rice (chura) and go out for hunting in the morning. The cakes are first [526] [624] offered to the ancestors and then eaten. In the afternoon the *Jogmanjhi* collects all the adult males of the village in an adjoining field for archery and other sports. After that in the evening they dance and sing, drink rice beer and spend the day in various kinds of [262] amusements. On the third day they go out to the fair or market (*hat*) after eating a preparation of rice and dal boiled together.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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animals is eaten by the men. The only woman who gets a share is the wife of the priest. Drinking, dancing and singing are followed by young men and women of the village.

Jom Sim: The *Jom Sim* is performed with many quaint ceremonies which differ somewhat for the different clans. That is why it is called clan festival. Mr. Culshaw recorded some stories from which it can be ascertained how it is connected with clan. "The Karwak Hasdak tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hasdak were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo, or kada, became known as Karwar Hasdak". The Soren Santal relate "that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as poita Soren".[1]

It is probably the oldest sacrifice the Santal have because it has more aboriginal features in it than any other sacrifice of theirs.

Dihri Hunting: The *Dihri* hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals which takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). *Dihri*, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a *Sal* tree with leaves and goes to the market, where people

[1] W.J. Culshaw—Tribal heritage. 1949. pp. 74 and 78.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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796 post, they generally accept it and this is followed by free drinks of handia (rice beer) and acclamations. All the other officials do the same and all other things remain the same as before.

796 I now propose to describe here some festivals which 177 are believed to have been borrowed by the Santals from others. These are as follows ;

Jatra Parab : The Santals have probably borrowed this from the *Bhuiyas*[1]. They perform this festival somewhere outside the village in the month of Magh (January-February). Pieces of stone are imbedded in raised mounds of earth and are painted with vermilion. The Naike then mixes some adwa rice, with milk and betel-nut together and offers this compound [782] to the *bonga*. Then a pigeon and a goat are sacrificed [787] and their blood poured out as an oblation. During the performance oracles are chanted by three or five persons in number, who sit close in a row on some adjacent spot, wag their heads to and fro all the time and work themselves into a prophetic frenzy. Any Santal, who consults them in a reverent manner, will at once get an answer to his questions whether as to his bodily ailments, the death of his cattle or the suspected presence of a witch in his village. For this at least four annas are thrown down at the feet of those five persons.

The Chata Parba : This is a Hindu festival which takes place in the rainy season in the month of Bhadra and is observed by one sept, the Hasdah and by their Kamars (blacksmiths). The preliminary function of

[1]A Tribe of Chota Nagpur (Bihar).

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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this festival resembles those of all the others but at the end of the offering a ceremony takes place. A wooden pole, about twelve cubits long, is erected and made to [417] turn a half circle perpendicularly and horizontally. The pole is fastened on a loose but strong iron pivot which rests in hole made in two upright pieces of wood about six feet in height from the ground. On the top of this revolving pole is tied a small ornamented umbrella and this is caused to jerk first one way and then the other. The reaction of this pole is followed with shouts and other noisy demonstrations of delight, the people gather handfuls of dust and dirt and forthwith begin to pelt the umbrella. This novel mode of veneration is at the same time accompanied with dances both by males and females. Refreshments and handia (rice beer) are dealt out from sheds erected for the purpose and the whole assembled population regale themselves in the open air with it. The sacrifices in this festival are always eaten at home and not on the spot.

Pata Parab : This festival is performed by the Santals in the month of Bhadra in honour of their *Pata Bonga*. It is a corrupt form of the Hindu *Charak festival*, in which the Hindus offer puja to Lord Siva. During this time Santals do acrobatic acts in honour of their [417] deity. On a vertical pole a revolving cross bar is fixed, [526] on either end of which a man is held by an iron hook [178] fastened to his clothing. The pair then are swung round and round very fast. Now-a-days instead of the iron [782] hook a length of rope is used to hold the men in position. In this festival the same sacrifices are offered as at *Jaira Parab*.

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177 Besides these, the Santals join in many of the Hindu festivals. In the *Durga Puja* ceremony the Santals come to[2] see the ceremoney and rejoice. Within their village they, both males and females, sing and dance together for these five days. The Santals
175 perform the *Kali Puja*. Evidence of this can be
177 ascertained from news published in one of the daily
796 newspapers in the year 1933 on February 16th.
[204]

"The Santal Guru Sannyasi Baba has sent the following letter to be District Magistrate, Malda :

> About a hundred Santals from Malda bring it to my notice that their annual Kali puja which was so long performed by their Sardar Jitu under my orders is going to be stopped. Unhappily, Jitu under a sad mistake died and the Santal Kali puja should not, on that account, be stopped. On the other hand, to allay this strained feeling amongst the Santals I propose to hold the Santal Kali puja at Malda myself. I assure you there will be no disturbance and not only that it will bring back the old good feelings so far as practicable under the circumstance.
>
> As the puja will be held in the month of Falgun I shall be highly obliged to recive an early reply to this letter at your earliest convenience. The annual Santal shooting passed off smoothly and the authorities allowed it and were satisfied."[1]

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[1] The Amrita Bazar Patrika, February 16, 1933.

2 [Erratum: this should read "to." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
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CHAPTER VII

Culture Contact

177 [128] In the concluding chapter I would like to assess the effect of the impact of alien cultures on the life and customs of the Santals of Santal Parganas.

175 648 [186] The Santals according to O'Malley[1] came from Birbhum and first settled in the Santal Parganas between 1790 and 1810. Outside Santal Parganas the Santals had contact with the Hindus but this contact was not very pleasant. They were oppressed by the Zamindars and Mahajans to such an extent that even now they call such non-Santals as "Diku" (those who trouble them). In the Santal Parganas also they were oppressed by the Zamindars and Mahajans, and when this oppression was unbearable in 1855 they became rebellious. After the rebellion the Government declared it as a restricted area. No body without the permission could enter the area. From this it appears that the contact of the Santals with the Hindus in the Santal Parganas in the beginning was not cordial. Naturally the Santals at that time could not have borrowed much culturally from the Hindus. They rather tried to stick to their old customs which would preserve their entity and maintain unity in their rank.

175 177 648 **Alien Religious Movements and their effect on the Santal religion**: From the earliest records it appears that not much Hindu influence operated in the Santal Parganas to convert them, except for the Kharwar

1. Bengal District Gazetteers (Santal Parganas).

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movement which had some tinge of Hinduism. This movement was started in 1871. The leader of this movement was known as Bhagrit of Taldiha and a title of *'babaji'* was added to his name. The word *'babaji'* is a Hindu word and so it seems that it was taken from the Hindus. Later on he was arrested and imprisoned and for the time being this movement was suppressed. Again in 1880 it was revived by one Dubia Gosain who came from the vicinity of Deoghar. His activities were more pro-Hindu. Several Hindu practices were introduced by this movement and one distinguishing feature was the worship of the *'babaji'* in the manner of reverence paid to the Sanyasis by the Hindus. The religious side of the movement had a colouring of Hinduism. The *'babaji'* smeared his body with ashes, took ganja and kept long hair and worshipped Mahadeo (Siva).

It is probable that due to this Kharwar movement the Santals have introduced some Hindu deities—Kalimata, Lakhmi mai, (goddess of wealth) Parvati, Mahadeo etc. in their pantheon of *Bongas*. The Santals have belief in Rama and Krishna, the Hindu Avtars.

The word Thakur is sometimes used by them in place of their High God Cando. The word Thakur is of Sanskrit origin and the Hindus use this name for gods in general.

Some of the festivals of the Santals have Hindu counter parts. The Pata Parab of the Santals is the imitation of the Hindu festival "Charak Puja". In this puja the Hindus worship Siva (Mahadeo). The Santal Sankrat festival is equivalent to the Hindu Pous

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179 Pabban. The Santals observe this festival on the last 796 day of the month of Pous, just like the Hindus do.

Besides this, the Santals take part in the Durga Puja festival of the Hindus. They wear new clothes and attend the Puja with wives and children and enjoy the fun for five days like the Hindus.

756 There exists a great controversy about the institu- 179 tion of Ojhaism among the Santals. There are possi- 174 bilities of its having been borrowed from the Hindus by the Santals since the practice of this form of magico-religious ritual has much in common between the two [114] groups, namely the Santals and the Hindus. Rev. Bodding also points out the probability of the borrowing of the principles for *Ojhaism* and much of its ritual from the Hindus though he does not thereby exclude completely the converse. In part substantiation of the above contention, which however is opposed by some authors on the subject, may be cited the striking similarity between the names and functions of the Santal and Hindu *Ojhas*, pointing to perhaps a strong interconnection between the two groups in respect of *Ojhaism*. The very name *Ojha* is Hindi and is adopted by the Santals from Hindi speaking people. Further it is interesting to note that *Ojha* is a caste name among the Hindu Brahmins, and in the early days the occupation of this caste group was mainly soothsaying, foretelling and astrology and curing snake bites etc. The concentration of such groups is in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It may therefore be considered very probable that the Santals have borrowed from the Hindus the essentials of *Ojhaism*, though certain indigenous

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elements have doubtless modified its practice among the Santals

Christian influence. In 1862 the Church missionary society started work in the Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal subdivisions and they built a colony for their converts in the Western Duars (in Godda). The Scandinavian Mission started their missionary activities in the Dumka subdivision in 1867. In 1884 the American Methodist Episcopal Mission started work in the Pakur subdivision. Other missions were the Christian Women's Board of Missions, a Wesleyan mission, which started work at Deoghar subdivision.

Thus it can be seen that after the Santal rebellion several Christian missions started their activities in and outside the Santal Parganas. It is stated in the Seventy fifth annual report of the Santal mission of Northern Churches (1941) that 25,000 Santals were converted. The record of missionaries has been a very creditable one in some respects, particularly in regard to education, sanitation, medical care and general raising of the standard of living, but in context of religion the missionary zeal has been somewhat misdirected. These converts are cut off from any activity that savours of worship of tribal *Bonges*. They do not contribute in cash or in kind to the offerings associated with village festivals. They do not take part in the worship of the five deities of the Jaherathan.

The converted Santals and even some non-Santals refer to Adam and Eve as *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Burhi* who according to the tradition of the tribal Santals are the parents of mankind and the human race

sprang from this pair. Also they correlate *Maran Buru* with 'Satan'. They believe that *Maran Buru* spoiled the first human pair and revealed to them the secret of sexual intercourse, just like the Christian who believe that Satan is responsible for the downfall of the first pair, Adam and Eve. The converted Santals observe the Christmas Day and Good Friday. Harvest Festivals are celebrated by decorating Churches and offering prayers.

Effect on the Social Culture of the Santals due to alien influence. The social system of the Santal is communistic in nature. In any festival, or ceremony the whole village takes part. This cohesion is now losing its strength. For this, missionary activities are to a certain extent responsible. The Christian converts are being cut off from social intercourse. Sometime a christian family is put to great inconvenience. This is particularly the case when a death occurs for the non-christians will have nothing whatever to do with the disposal of the dead body. The non-christian method of disposing the dead body is by cremation whereas the converted Santals practise burial and subsequent mourning and funeral ceremonies according to the Christian way. There is no bar to marrying more than one wife in Santal tribal custom. But this practice is strictly prohibited among Christian Santals as Christian religion strictly prohibits *bigamy*. Cross cousin marriage, and marriage with non-Santals is not tolerated by the tribal Santals but among Christian Santals, these things are not prohibited.

The marriage ceremony is held either in the Church or in the courtyards of the house of the bride's parents

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and it is conducted according to the provision of the Indian Christian Marriage Act.

Material Culture. Material culture of the Santals of the Santal parganas has not much changed. They now wear cotton dhuties, shirts and gangees and the women have accepted cotton saris which are used by the Hindus. The well-to-do Christian Santals wear European dress, *i.e.* coats, pants, shirts, socks and shoes. The christian women wear Saris, blouses and petti coat according to the Hindu style.

Some of the younger men and women of the Christian community go out for employment in the towns and cities and when they come back they display their superior material culture, such as fountain pen, wristwatches and other luxury goods.

Rice beer is their important drink but the Christian missionaries make propaganda in favour of total abstinence, and the Christian Santals are gradually giving up this habit and tea is being substituted for it. Machine made cigarettes are slowly coming into use.

In the preparation of rice it seems they have copied something from the Bengali Hindus. The Santals like the Bengalis use boiled rice for their food and unboiled rice for offering to their tribal deities.

The indigenous husking machine of the Santals is mortar and pestle, but they also use husking lever (dhenki) in husking rice which they have copied from their Hindu neighbours.

The Santals, when they speak among themselves, use their own language. But with the 'Dikhus' in the Santal Parganas they speak in broken Hindi and

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177 Bengali. The female members mostly cannot speak any
192 language except their own. They learn Hindi when
[191] they come in contact with the Hindi speaking labourers in the coal mines, railway workshops or when they come in contact with the Hindu Mahajans (money
177 lenders) and traders. Some of the Hindi and Bengali
192 words have also been introduced in their vocabulary which can be noticed in the language of their *mantras* and *prayers*.

302 Vermilion is one of the most important item for
585 marriage and in the worship of deities both for the
177 Hindus and the Santals. Some think that the Santals
194 have copied it from the Hindus, but it is doubtful whether it is their borrowed thing at all. Because in such important social customs as marriage and worship of tribal deities, vermilion is considered by the Santals
[583] as an essential ingredient. There is a kind of marriage in which a Santal can marry a woman simply by applying vermilion on her forehead, which shows that vermilion is the only binding source of marriage here. Such an important ingredient of culture is not usually borrowed and we can take it as a case of culture similarity.
177 Similarly, another custom of *Garde Jawas* is prevalent both among the Santals and the Hindus. There are other similarities in their social, religious and economic structure with the Hindus, but all of them cannot be attributed to their borrowing from the Hindus. Infact, saying so, implies that the Santals had no culture of of their own, which can not be true. It seems that there has been a two-way traffic of culture exchange-Hindus having borrowed some elements from the Santals and vice versa.

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The Santals have many things of value in their culture. There are many elements that are well worth preservation and which have a great deal to teach the so called civilized neighbours.

The Santals have a large number of folklores and folk songs which contain many new ideas and thoughts. Their art of recreation brings a balance in their life which is lamentably absent in the civilized neighbours.

The political organisation of the Santals is worth studying. Although they have neither studied any literature on this line nor they have any written constitution yet they are extremely disciplined people and are managing their tribal affairs in a highly democratic way. The communal life of the Santal is well organised, in which everything is shared even joy and sorrow of one is the joy and sorrow of the whole community. This virtue is lacking in the so called civilized society where life is individualistic and so we find more selfishness in civilized people.

The knowledge of herbs and medicines of the Santal medicine-men is highly developed. Rev. P.O. Bodding with the help of two qualified doctors, Mrs. Bodding M.B. & Ch.B. (Edin) and Dr. B.B. Bogh, collected a large number of plants and other stuff used by the Santal medicine-men. He published the names of the plants and other stuff, the list of prescriptions and veterinary medicines in the memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in two parts.[1] Rev. Bodding men-

1. P.O. Bodding—Studies in Santal Medicine and connected folklore—Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta) Vol. X No. I p. 1-132 and No. II p. 133-426 (1927).

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757 tioned in his introductory remarks the following, "When
278 in January 1890 he came out to the Santals, he was from the very first brought into contact with their medicine. It did not take long to be made aware of the Santals having medical treatment and medicines of their own, and of their belief in this. They might doubt the efficacy of certain medicine; but many were affirmed to be proved, as they called it.

It was not seldom to hear them profess to be able to cure what European doctors consider hopeless. In some cases (not hopeless ones) that came to the writer's notice is also seemed to be a fact that they had applied remedies of an efficacious nature. There is just the possibility that among the many ingredients used by them some few might be found that are not known to western science as medicines".

278 If these medicinal ingredients be scientifically analysed and tested, something of value might be found and thereby the modern medical science may be benefited.

157 Above all the Santals are well known for their simplicity, honesty, straightforwardness, frankness and sincerity in thought and action. It is regrettable that [178] these virtues of the Santals are gradually disappearing as a result of unregulated cultural change.

• 177 Thus from the above it appears that Hinduism has not brought any appreciable change in the Santal culture. Except the introduction of a few Hindu gods and goddesses no other change can be found in the Santal religion. In social sphere there is no effect. In material culture some minor changes have taken

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place. It is not proper to say that the traditional culture of the Santal in the Santal Parganas has undergone transformation by coming in contact with the Hindus, whereas Christinity has affected a major change by imposing on the Santals its particular way of life. The drastic interference of the Christian missioneries on traditional culture of the Santals, has destroyed tribal solidarity and forbidden the joys, recreation feasting and romance of communal life.

In trying to solve the problem of poverty and material inadequacy, the missionary has confused the issue. To believe that material prosperity is only co-existent with a change of religion and not with an indigenous religious pattern, is to betray dogmatic creed. Thus from a concern for the plight of the body, the missionary became a champion of the fate of the soul of these people. Two decisive drawbacks are manifest in the pursuit of such an ideology. Firstly, the tribal Santals tend to confuse the casual material prosperity of the missionary converts, as the direct fruits of change of religion, and quite often such gains are incongruous to them in context of their surroundings. Thus they are dubious of accepting a new religion, even formally, since its gains do not suit them. Secondly, they ill-comprehend the philosophy of an alien creed, and at best becomes a poor convert, clinging to the mere image of the structure of new ideology. In this respect they are worse off than their non-converted, who at least have the full solace of their belief in their own tribal gods and who are convicted[1] of their power and interest in them.

1 [Erratum: this should read "convinced." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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177 Further, most of Santals who actively seek the new folds, are either those who are feeling[1] from persecution of their fellow-men for irregularities like forbidden marriages etc. or those who are in dire economic distress, and who hope to gain employment and protection thereby. This creates an unhealthy [578] rivalry among the groups and upsets the balance of their tribal society. Though there is no formal outcasting or persecution of the converted tribals, there yet exists a strained atmosphere created by the elimination of the common platform of tribals activity. Participation by converts in all ceremonials and rituals on marriage, birth, death etc. is not possible, and this is creating a separative tendency, tending the promotion of division among the group on economic, cultural and social levels. The tribal solidarity is broken and the group as a whole suffers from such fission.

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1 [Erratum: this should read "fleeing." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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of great prestige, it is true of nearly all the village headmen that their whole bearing reveals a sense of dignity, and the exercise of their responsibilities has developed a practical wisdom in dealing with men and affairs that is not to be despised. It is unfortunate that the trend of policy under the British Government (except in the Santal Parganas district) has done much to undermine the authority of the headman, firstly through the development of a highly organized and centralized system of justice. When the aggrieved party in a dispute between Santals is able to seek redress in the distant district courts he is under a strong temptation to ignore the findings of the informal village and tribal councils. The temptation is all the stronger when the Hindu law administered by the court differs from Santal customary law, as it does in some important particulars. Secondly, the organs of local self-government which have been fostered in Bengal take no account of the Santal village system. It is true that some effort is made to secure representation of Santal interests by a system of nomination, but local influence has passed largely into the hands of the landlords. The government is aware of some of the disabilities under which Santals live, and since the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935, "Special Officers" have been appointed in several districts. It is their duty to watch over the interests of the Santals, but the success of their work depends largely on their own initiative, a factor which varies from one individual to another. In a few cases where Santal headmen have maintained their position in relation to dealings with non-Santals and with government, it is because they have secured some education and have been able to compete on more equal terms with their neighbours.

None of the other village officials compare with the headman for prestige. There is often a deputy headman, the *paranik*, who works as an adviser, but his main reason for existence is to function for the headman when the latter may be ill or away on family affairs, and he does not occupy a prominent place at other times. Many villages at the present day omit to appoint one. Next in importance comes the *jogmanjhi*, who is still found in every village. It is difficult to define his functions in a phrase; he is a kind of "censor of morals". As such he is the guardian of the morals of the young men in the village, and his wife exercises oversight of the morals of the young women. Unlike many of the tribes to whom they are closely related, the Santals have no dormitory system for the young people of the village. They have no memory of ever having possessed

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The organization which binds groups of villages together is loose by comparison with the village system. The Santals distinguish between the various sections of the country in which their villages are situated, calling them *parganas*. Each *pargana* has a distinctive name, which may be either the name of a village situated within its borders or a general name. Over each of the *parganas* a *parganath* is supposed to have jurisdiction. McAlpin's report, the result of an inquiry instituted by the Bengal Government which led to the Tenancy Amendment Act of 1918, in addition to its main purpose of suggesting measures for the protection of Santal lands, dealt also with the condition of the Santal village system. McAlpin reported that the *pargana* system was far gone in decay, and it is not possible to question his conclusion. Binu Hāsdāk' of Tantidanga, late *parganath* of the Sarenga area, was typical of his class. His mind was well stored with the customary law of the tribe, and from time to time he was called in by nearby villages to help more particularly with disputes arising out of marriage tangles. He was personally popular and had some prestige as the possessor of valuable remedies against sickness, but on his own confession his authority was of a very limited kind. "What can I do", he once said, "unless the people of the village are agreed?" There is the crux of the situation; in the village, public opinion is a wellnigh irresistible force. Binu used, nevertheless, to go happily about his errands, for among other advantages which accrued he received a fee amounting to one rupee four annas when a guilty party was fined.

Kinship ties share with the well-knit village system the governance of the Santal's daily life, regulating his relationships with his fellows. The tribe is divided into clans, and each clan is again divided into sub-clans. The clan descends through the father, and when girls marry they are taken into the clans of their husbands. The clans have a totemistic basis and they are exogamous. Land is conceived of as belonging to the clan. Although individual and family ownership is now the rule, Santals will not countenance the transfer of land from one clan to another. The one exception for which allowance is made has been forced on them by economic necessity; it occurs in the case of a man without sons who brings his daughter's husband into his own house to carry on the cultivation, the son-in-law thereby acquiring rights in the property for descendants. The rights conferred by Hindu personal law on daughters in the property of their fathers or on wives in the property of their

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husbands are strenuously resisted by the Santals, and the fact that the civil courts administer the Hindu laws of succession leads to many cases of tension. In practice, certain rights are conceded to women for "humanitarian" reasons. To daughters who do not marry—a rare but not unknown phenomenon—and to widows, with or without children, the right to maintenance is given. Since the woman on marriage becomes a member of another clan, the succession to land cannot be carried through her.

Ties of kinship determine standards of behaviour to a great extent. Life in community is an art to be learnt, and the Santal has his own rigid standards of right conduct. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is one of deep intimacy and affection, which is no doubt fostered by the necessity for leaving the young children with the grandparents when both parents have to go out to work. The rules governing familiarity and its converse, avoidance, are based on kinship ties. The joking relationship, apart from grandparents and grandchildren, extends to his wife's younger sisters for a man and to her husband's younger brothers and her elder sister's husband for a woman. People within the circle of this relationship can talk freely with one another, indulging in jokes and calling each other names. Conversely, extreme care is called for in relationships which do not fall within this circle. A Santal child must behave with great respect to anyone who belongs to the same generation as his parents. Names are sparingly used between individuals, and relationship terms are the usual form of address. Husband and wife will on no account use each other's names, in distinction from the Hindu taboo, which is enjoined on the wife only. They behave circumspectly towards each other in public. A woman has to carry herself with care before her husband's elder brother. Her dress must at all times be properly arranged in front of him; she cannot sit with her legs dangling over the edge of a bed or the low veranda running round the house, her hair must be arranged, and she does not talk to him at all apart from the necessities of daily life. The rules extend to the finer forms of courtesy. Every Santal knows what is expected of him when he is meeting relatives—whether he has to make a deep obeisance to the ground before the person he has met, or whether he should wait for the other person to greet him first and then acknowledge the greeting by cupping his hands together and raising them towards his chest. A greeting between equals is performed by means of a

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They owe their present position of affluence to Santal habits of insobriety. Secondly, much of the land has been acquired by trading castes from Bihar who followed the Santals when the country was being opened up. They brought with them such things as salt and cooking oil, which they exchanged for grain. Clothing was added at a later date, for until within living memory Santals largely wove their own clothes from cotton grown on the lands surrounding their homesteads. Like the Sundis, these traders provided credit facilities for their customers and so gained power over them. The monsoon fails on the average once in seven years in Western Bengal, and the traders import grain in times of scarcity. Formerly this was lent out at a recognized rate of interest amounting to 100 per cent. per annum. The only security which a Santal had to offer was a mortgage on his land, and, if the trader wished it, the almost inevitable result was an action in the courts, followed by an auction at which the creditor purchased the land. The third important class among the landlords are the Brahmins, descendants of the men who were brought into the country to act as priests and court officials to the local *rajas* or rulers. At the time when British rule was being established many of these *rajas* exercised control over tracts of country that were largely covered by forest and sparsely inhabited. They encouraged Santals and some other peoples to settle as cultivators, and they also rewarded the services of their Brahmin officials by grants of land. Brahmins are forbidden by caste rules to engage in cultivation, so they in their turn encouraged Santals to become their tenants.

The Santals have a proverb: "A *Deko* friend is like a thorn fence." In other words, if you stumble into it you are liable to suffer from scratches. They sometimes make fun of themselves and exaggerate the fear that they feel. Thus: "The elders used to run away and hide in the jungle whenever they saw an umbrella approaching the village." But in spite of the fun, the fear persists. A difficulty arose a few years ago in a village Santal church when the superintending missionary placed there as pastor a man who was a *Deko*. This resulted in a vigorous protest, and the leader of the villagers' delegation summed up their feelings in the following parable: "When a kite is wheeling overhead the chickens all take shelter under their mother's wings. After they have grown up they know that the kite can do them no harm, but nevertheless whenever a kite is overhead they quake inwardly and cannot get on with their pecking." In the company of non-Santals, a Santal is inclined to become tongue-

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separate representation. In the elections to the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly which took place in 1946 a Santal offered himself for election for the first time from the Bankura Rural Scheduled caste constituency. He was a member of one of the rare well-to-do Santal families and had received education up to the Intermediate Arts standard of the Calcutta University at the mission college in Bankura. He stood as an "Independent" and he was supported by the Moslem League organization, but he failed to be elected. His rival was a non-Santal member of the Scheduled castes who was a Congress candidate. No Santal has yet been elected to the Bengal Provincial Assembly.

The fact that the dominant Santal attitude to their neighbours is one of suspicion and latent hostility does not mean that this has always been the case. There are some indications pointing to a time when relations between Santals and Hindus were more friendly than they are today. The story already related about the Mahato is one. It may well have been that during the period of Moslem suzerainty the aboriginals made common cause with the Hindus. To go back much farther, P. O. Bodding[1] has suggested that in the story of the *Ramayana*, one of the great Hindu epics, there is a hint of an alliance between aboriginals and the hero of the epic, Ram, when he made war against the King of Lanka. The reference is to the assistance given by the "Hanuman log", or monkeys, who, it has been inferred, may well have been in fact human beings of the stock from which the ancestors of the present-day Santals were drawn. In Santal folklore there are stories which describe the marriage of human beings with monkeys, and there is little doubt that such stories symbolize the results of interracial marriages.

Living as they do in close contact with their neighbours, the Santals have borrowed heavily from the ideas and institutions around them, and in some cases they have doubtless contributed to the common stock. It is almost impossible to isolate certain features in their culture and say that these have been borrowed from non-Santal sources. That which is distinctive in Santal culture is the way in which they have used a common background to conserve their tribal life and to provide themselves with the rudiments of a philosophy. The retention of their language as a vigorous element of their own culture must have preserved much from the ancient days of their own life, and has to some extent cut them off from familiarity with the epics

[1] *District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas.*

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and legends of Hinduism. The linguistic evidence shows how their material culture has been vitally affected and has some bearing on the more elusive realm of thought and belief. The grammatical structure of Santali has little in common with that of the Indo-Aryan tongues. It is an agglutinative and not an inflectional language. There have, however, been large and extensive borrowings of words. An instructive example can be taken from their method of husking rice. The term *ḍhinki*, used for a foot-pedal rice husker, has been borrowed from Bengali, and a *ḍhinki* is found in almost every home. The rice that is husked at the time of making sacrifices must be prepared in the home of the village priest, and in its preparation the use of the older and more primitive *ukhuṛ* is obligatory. This is a wooden mortar in which the rice is husked by hand with a wooden pestle, or *tok*. Both these words are Austro-Asiatic in origin. It is likely that when the household adopted the new method of husking rice the tribe did not change over from the old method of husking the sacred rice for fear of a loss in efficacy. One reason given is that as the *ḍhinki* is operated by the foot, rice husked in the *ḍhinki* is unclean and so unfit for offering to the spirits. It may be that the association of a mortar and pestle with sexual symbolism enhanced its magical value. The symbolism in this case is familiar to the Santal mind, for one way of expressing differences of sex is to refer to boys as "pestles" and to girls as "mortars". The *ukhuṛ* has to be used by the medicine man in preparing remedies; it is also used at marriages, when the feet of the bridegroom's party are washed over an *ukhuṛ*, and an *ukhuṛ* filled with water is required during the death ceremonies. In Bengal the rice which forms the daily food of the people is boiled before husking, and the Santals follow the same method in preparing it; but the rice used in sacrifices, *aḍwa caole*, is never so treated, being dried in the sun.

Among their domestic animals, the fowl, the dog and the goat have non-Bengali names, while the names for pigeons, sheep, pigs and, most important of all, their cattle are borrowed. Fowls, goats and pigs are all used in their sacrifices. In the realm of wild life the Santal has found little need to borrow a vocabulary from his neighbours. Wild animals, birds, trees and shrubs, many fish and insects, also snakes, have Santali names. The same is true of most of the weapons used in hunting. Although the term for paddy is Santal, the names of all the implements now used in rice cultivation and the terms for the

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the food of the *Turuk*, rice or other food, the spirits will run away. If anyone has fever or if we want to exorcize a spirit, we try to give him curds made by a *Turuk* to eat. They say that in olden times one Mirza Turuk drove us from the country we were in. On a certain plain we made ready twelve carts and fled away across the open country. Mirza Turuk searched and could not find us. He thought: 'I must search for the tracks of twelve carts.' However, as we drove the twelve carts one behind the other, we made only one track, and so he never found us." The local Moslem population is very small[1] and confined to one or two villages of weavers and cultivators, who are themselves deeply affected by the Hindu environment. No doubt the story is very different in those districts of Northern Bengal where the Moslems predominate, but even there the great dissimilarity between Moslem and Santal culture probably militates against influences passing from the one to the other.

Christian influence, the result of a sustained and conscious effort on the part of missions, is considered later. Of deliberate efforts to Hinduize the religious practices and beliefs of the Santals the area is ignorant.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 2

The relation of the aboriginal peoples to Hindu society has given rise to much controversy and discussion in India, not all of which is conducted in a spirit of scientific inquiry. An able presentation of many of the facts dealt with in this and the previous chapter, together with much else, and written from the Hindu standpoint, can be found in *The Aborigines—"So-called"—and Their Future*, by G. S. Ghurye, Ph.D. (Cantab.), published by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, 1943.

[1] The figures given for the local Moslem population in 1931 were as follows:

	Males	*Females*
Ranisandh Thana	238	170
Raipore Thana	338	478

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doubtful whether the concept of monotony has any place in a Santal's mind. His love of a *porob*, or festival, is a byword in the tribe, and it is fostered by many occasions in the Santal calendar as well as by opportunities for "seeing", as they say, Hindu festivals. Some of these gatherings bring together the Santals from great distances. One of the most remarkable in the area takes place on the outskirts of Sarenga at the time of the Lakshmi Puja, at the full moon of the Bengali month of *Karttik* (October-November). This is a Hindu festival, and it is kept with due pomp and ceremony by the family of the local landlord, who is of a mercantile caste. This family built up the celebration by inviting their Santal tenants to come and dance on a field on the village boundary. For many years it has been of more than local significance. Villagers from ten to fifteen miles away turn up in force, and some come from much greater distances. Until the year 1930 they used to dance and sing throughout the night, and on one occasion a missionary counted over five hundred large drums. In the following year a small but determined group of Santal reformers, one of whose aims was to stop their womenfolk from dancing in public, practically brought the gathering to a standstill, but it was revived in 1932 in the modified form in which it continues. At about noon the air begins to resound to the beating of the drums as parties of villagers make their way along the roads and jungle tracks and approach the scene of the gathering. From the four corners of the compass they converge on the open field, men and women in festive attire, the women especially resplendent in new *saris* with gaily designed borders, their hair bedecked with flowers and their arms heavy with ornaments. The drumming intensifies as new parties arrive and more and more lines of dancers are formed. Finally the crescendo of sound from the drums batters on the ear-drums of the bystanders, and even at a distance of four miles it conveys an impression of continuous thunder in the sky. Then the clamour dies away as gradually as it began, and by nine o'clock the field is quiet once again. Since the night dancing was stopped the numbers have diminished slightly. Most of the parties return to their own villages and continue the dance there.

The weeks are enlivened by visits to the local markets. One of the entries in Babulal's record relates to a market day during the early hot weather: "Today was market day. From a very early hour everyone was preparing to go to market. It is very hot at the present time, and if we do not go early the

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across the axe edge, then held it so that the blood should pour on to the parched rice, after which he flung away the body of the pigeon with his left hand and placed the severed head with the parched rice. The hen was sacrificed in exactly the same way. He then rose to his feet for the sacrifice of the goat. This was of necessity a more elaborate proceeding. A little way off from the shrine, to the south-west, there stood a "killing-post" with a cleft at its upper end. The goat's neck was forced into this cleft, and it was secured with rope. Its owner held the goat firmly, clasping its front legs and securing them by drawing them up and backward over the goat's back, and the priest severed the head with one quick stroke of the axe. Immediately and with great speed he took hold of both the head and the body, so that the blood might drop on to the parched rice. This completed the offerings for the day, and he gathered up the heads of the animals and his other possessions and took them away in a small basket.

This Sarenga shrine affords a good example of the way in which Hinduism can take over the customs and use the beliefs of those who are not, strictly speaking, within the fold, but in spite of the eclecticism here apparent there is a point beyond which the Santals of the village will not go in accommodating themselves to Hindu society. The *Mokor* festival at the end of *Pus* is celebrated by all the lower Hindu castes of the area as well as by the Santals, and at Sarenga it is accompanied by a gathering near this shrine, when many different people, including the Santals, take part in the stick dancing. On the other hand, in 1930 a proposal made by the local Hindus of influence roused great indignation and had to be abandoned. A Santal couple from the village who had previously been baptized were persuaded, as a result of a mission by an agent of the Arya Samaj, to renounce the Christian faith. It was proposed that they should undergo the *suddhi*, or purification ceremony, at the hands of the Arya missionary at Lokhon Mañjhi's shrine. The Santals immediately announced that they would not recognize the validity of any such ceremony and that if it took place at their shrine they would cut down the tree and desecrate the shrine with their own hands. Many beliefs have grown up around the place. Binu of Tantidanga used to say that there were certainly times when the animals moved; he himself had twice seen them do so at the time of the *Pus* festival. He used to relate the local legend of how when Europeans had first tried to live at Sarenga they found

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796 some thirty miles from Sarenga. This fair, which is one of the most famous in Western Bengal, takes place at the time of the Dol Jatra near a temple dedicated to Krishna. The last day of the *mela* is chiefly renowned for the fact that on that day there is a great concourse of Santals for dancing.

[171] [177] One festival which is shared with tribes living right across Central India[1] is the *Karam*. The fact that it is not peculiar to them is known to the Santals, and one informant once told me that they must have borrowed it from the Mahato. He had seen that the Mahato celebrated it and knew of the special relationship between the Mahato and his own people. Many of the songs contain references to Ram and Lokhon, heroes of the *Ramayana*. The festival is rather difficult to characterize, for its celebration takes different forms and arises from different causes. It is connected in all cases with the desire for prosperity, but it may be either a public or a private celebration. The *karam* is a tree[2] that is associated with the god Krishna in the *Vishnu Purana*. When a shoot of this tree is found growing in the land round a house or springing from the roof thatch, the head of that house is responsible for instituting an annual celebration of the festival. The fact that while it is celebrated annually in a great many villages it is not found invariably is perhaps accounted for by its accidental origin. The festival is also associated with certain other definite events. In some cases [156] the leading celebrant is the local *ojha*, who holds a *Karam* festival at the beginning of the month of *Dāsāĕ* and before he sends out his disciples on their annual begging expedition. [622] [764] Sometimes it is celebrated in connection with the appointment of the new headman of a village, and sometimes in connection with the death ceremonies of a man of substance. Sometimes it is associated with the *Mak' Mōṛĕ*, an occasional sacrifice to the [782] "Five". These spirits are peculiarly liable to become offended, and offerings are made to them to avert their wrath, which takes the form of inflicting a poor harvest or an epidemic. Whatever the occasion may be, the celebration of the *Karam* is regarded as an insurance either on behalf of a particular family or on behalf of the whole village. It may be either a way of enhancing good fortune or of warding off evil. Where in the area it has become an annual festival it is held at the full moon in the month of *San* (July-August). At sunset the un-

[113] [1] References to Central India are to be found in *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by V. Elwin, Oxford University Press, pp. 3-11.

[2] *Adinia cordifolia*, Hook., f. and B.

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553 cry like crows and kites! In that case we call an *ojha* to tell us
[756] the reason and we say to him: 'See what this child is up to; why
[787] does he cry?' The *ojha* asks for oil, reads the omens and then says: 'Such and such a dead relative is claiming that the child be named after him.' This usually happens when we want to name the child after someone on the mother's side. The dead ancestors on the father's side do not like to have it so." The above passage occurs in a part of his diary where Babulal was reporting the birth of twins, for whose naming there are special rules. Twins are known as *boṅga* children, and their advent is not regarded as a misfortune. He continued his narrative: "Today the babies did not cry at all, for they were to have *boṅga* names." One explanation is that *Maraṅ Buru* had twelve sisters who were twins, and I have been told that the children of *Cando* were
551 twins. The pairs of names that are given to twins are drawn
845 from Hindu mythology and they are, for girls, Cita and Kapur, Dargi and Porgi, Hisi and Dhumni; boy twins are named Ram and Lokhon, Loba and Kisur, Cand and Bhaira, Sidho and Kanhu. Most Santals when asked have denied categorically that dissimilar twins are posible. The only case met with in eleven years were twins born at the Mission Hospital in Sarenga, and it proved impossible to follow up their subsequent history.

551 The name given at the *chatiar* ceremony is known as the *bhitri iṅtum*, which means literally the "inner" or "private" name. Everyone knows what his own inner name is, but it is little used by others. In addition to his private name each person receives at least one nickname, which is called the "upper" or "outer" name. This is necessary in part because of the prohibitions attaching to the use of names by certain categories of relations. If a boy has been named after one of his grandfathers, then all those who are prohibited by relationship from pronouncing the grandfather's name, e.g. the grandmother, are equally prohibited from applying that name to anyone else. Even those who could pronounce the name do not do so while the grandfather is alive, in order to avoid confusion. The nicknames given in early childhood do not remain fixed but are replaced by others as the boy grows up. Some result from the same kind of easy intimacy and teasing affection with which we are familiar in English society and are bestowed by those who stand in a "joking" relationship with the boy. A new element has been
• [177] introduced through the naturalization of many Hindu names, particularly among those Santals who have received some edu-

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cation. In many cases Bengali names that bear some resemblance to the form of the private name come into use. Thus Podo has become Padma Lochan and Kala has become Kalachand. Ernest Soren was known throughout the countryside by the name that he received at his baptism. At the time of his *chatiar* he was given the name of Singrai, this being the name of his paternal grandfather's elder brother. From the same time he was addressed as Jhongol, thus receiving not only the private name but the outer name of the same relative, who was not then alive. Before he could walk he was usually addressed as Thenta, a name that signifies a restless bundle of mischief. Later when he was growing up he was known by his contemporaries as Dangra Sorkar, or Sorkar for short. The name Sorkar is often applied to those who are going to school, but he was known as the "bullock" Sorkar because he did not conceal his fondness for beef, whereas educated Santals are generally supposed to conform to Hindu custom and shun it. Names of relatives are bestowed without regard to whether the relatives concerned are living or dead.

The village community takes no formal notice of the growing child after the performance of the *janam chatiar* until he is ready for the ceremony of initiation, or *caco chatiar*. *Caco* is a word that means a toddler, one who is learning to walk. The ceremony, however, is not performed until the child is growing up. It is somewhat misleading to describe the ceremony as one of initiation, for in comparison with the elaborate ritual with which initiation is accomplished in many parts of the world it is a pale and colourless proceeding. In the Bankura area the performance of the rite is of an extremely casual nature. It is nevertheless the equivalent for Santals of initiation ceremonies in other societies, and it retains its importance not because of the intrinsic character of the ritual but because of certain consequences that follow from its non-observance. Unless the *caco chatiar* has been performed, no Santal boy or girl may be married, nor cremated after death. It may be that the custom has been drastically modified because of the expense involved, as the whole village should be feasted. It is now customary for families to wait until the ceremony can be performed for several children at the same time, and it is therefore delayed until the impending marriage of the eldest child makes it inevitable. In the village of Barikul, Babulal recorded a case in which the father and the mother had been living together for some years without having themselves gone through any marriage ceremonial. For both of them it had

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585 If the distance between the two villages be great, the party of the bridegroom will have arrived on the outskirts of the bride's village on that evening and are accommodated in a special shelter for the night. They do not enter the village, but at the first sign of approaching morning the go-between comes from the bridegroom's camp, bringing with him a small quantity of the oil and turmeric left over from the bridegroom's anointing, and with this the bride is once more anointed.

585 574 [624] Meanwhile the bridegroom's party make ready to approach the bride's house. The *jogmaṇjhi* and *godet'* of the village meet them at the end of the village street, where they are asked to wait awhile. Mats are placed for them to sit on and they are given tobacco to smoke. The bridegroom's party always enter a village from the west end and leave from the east end. The officials who greet the party are accompanied by a band of young folk from the village who sing and dance and who in the course of their songs make insulting remarks about the bridegroom and the village from which he comes. These insults are expected and have to be accepted in good part. When they at length set out for the bride's house, the bridegroom is carried by a woman who lifts him and carries him on her hip as she would a child. On first arriving at the bride's home, some of her friends pretend that the bridegroom is not properly groomed, so they proceed to shave him again with a leaf for a mirror and a rough piece of wood for [606] a razor. When he greets his future father-in-law he places a necklace round his neck while his father-in-law winds a turban cloth round his head, after which they sprinkle water over each other [276] with a spray of mango leaves. They exchange *pan*[1] and embrace 585 each other. When the bride is brought out of the house she is carried in the same way as the bridegroom, and first of all they sprinkle sun-dried rice over each other (this is called "sowing" the rice), and follow it by sprinkling water with the sprays of mango leaves. The bride is seated in a basket and made to face the west, while the bridegroom faces towards the east. Then he takes from a small wooden box that is wrapped in his waistband the vermilion which he proceeds to place on the bride's head, and as he does so the assembled company make the air resound with shouts of "*Horibol*". This is sheer Hinduism, for it is • [177] the invocation of Hari, one of the names of Vishnu the Saviour. The bridegroom helps the bride down from the basket, places an

[1] The leaf of the *Piper betle*, i.e., rolled with lime, the nut of the areca palm and other spices wrapped inside it. Rarely eaten by Santals except on ceremonial occasions, but very generally used by others in Bengal.

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was sent to the Sub-Divisional Officer with a petition. The result was negative. After still more deliberation we went to Dumka and with our Secretary's help placed the petition before the Deputy Commissioner. This was immediately granted. A few days after this nearly two thousand more of the population in this area, 80 per cent. of which is stated to be Santals, got their little share of the promised loan."[1]

At Sarenga as elsewhere the necessary preoccupation with the problem of daily bread led to other developments in policy. In addition to becoming a landlord the mission also became a cultivator and employer of labour, thus being in a position to introduce improvements in farming methods to the people in a practical manner and not merely by preaching. Furthermore, something had to be done about the problem of debt that was crippling the Santals. Loans were granted to individuals, and in this matter, too, a later generation of missionaries, which is wise after the event, is inclined to question the wisdom of what was done. An attempt was made in the early years to give loans to cultivators at reasonable rates of interest through the organization of a grain bank, but most of the beneficiaries, unaccustomed to any but the most overbearing and unscrupulous behaviour from their moneylenders in the past, did not see the urgency of loan repayment, and in later years there has been an attempt to establish co-operatives on a sounder basis. Some of the loans given in the early years in order to save land for a family were on a scale that a subsequent generation that has had to try to realize them can only regard as inordinately lavish. The need for this kind of help has been greatly diminished since protective legislation came into force.

If missionaries were compelled to work for economic justice often against their will, they found other spheres open to them which they were eager to enter. Everywhere they have been the pioneers of education for the Santals; until recently they were almost the only agencies in the field. In the district of Midnapore the American Baptist Mission has, by a delegation of authority by the government, been almost solely responsible for the administration of funds and the supervision of schools. These range from the village primary school with a single teacher to a Santal High School for boys where they may sit for the matriculation examination of Calcutta University. In the Bankura district a missionary has always been a member of the Santal Education

[1] *The Seventy-Fifth Annual Report of the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches*, 1941, pp. 46–47.

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Santal, who is not friendly disposed towards puritanism in any shape or form.

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Another type of objection to Christianity arises out of what may be termed the "marginal teaching", largely unintended, of those who propagate the faith. "I shall never become a Christian", said an old man. "What should I do with a pair of shoes?" This remark was greeted with evident amusement on the part of the bystanders. He had been more impressed by the garb of the preachers than by their words. Many of the younger men and women of the Christian community drift away to employment in the towns, and when they return home they are not slow to display their superior material culture. Shoes, fountain-pens and wrist-watches are symbols of prosperity, and it is natural that in the Santal village they should at times be confused with the fruits of Christianity. The Santal who has no desire to change his lot or who sees no possibility of doing so is content with the old way of life.

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Undoubtedly the most deep-rooted objection, however, arises from the fact that the individual Santal knows of no security apart from his clan and tribe, and he sees in Christianity something that threatens to become a disintegrating influence. This awareness has developed its own mythology in beliefs which appear to the Christian missionary to be entirely without rational foundation and which seem to have been deliberately invented by persons maliciously disposed. What, for example, can be made of the commonly repeated assertion that the ritual of Baptism is accomplished by means that revolt the sensibilities of Santals, such as the transfer of spittle from the mouth of the officiating minister to that of the convert? Yet it is likely that the stories have grown without deliberate intent. Santals affirm that mixed marriages are actively encouraged by Christians. This belief, though mistaken, is not without foundation. One of the early converts related that he held back because he was not married. According to his own account he had some difficulty in making the missionary understand his attitude, for if he had married after Baptism the only alternatives before him would have been to marry someone who was related to him or to marry a non-Santal, and quite naturally he could bring himself to do neither. The most usual response to the appeal of the preacher is expressed in the words: "Yes, your religion is good and some day we shall all become Christians: but—we shall wait until all of us can do it together." Less commonly one hears the reply: "If the headman became a Christian, all in this village would do so."

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CHAPTER 14

THE NEW COMMUNITY

THE Santal Christian community is more than an aggregate of individuals who have broken off from the tribe or have been born of parents who did so. It possesses a social life of its own; the individuals and families who compose it have opened their lives to a new influence and with it to a system of ideas that is capable of establishing a pattern of social behaviour distinct from the old. The new pattern will not be different in every respect from the old, which has much of value to contribute and which still exercises a powerful influence in certain directions. By examining the main trends in the present life of one particular community we may not be able to forecast what the pattern will be when Santals in far greater numbers have entered the Church, but we should be able to see the outlines of development in the years immediately ahead.

The great majority of the Santal Christians in the area have retained their status as villagers and cultivators. Their economic interests and activities are the same as those of their non-Christian neighbours. They toil for their daily bread and have to rely on the same aptitudes, skill and intelligent foresight and they earn respect according to the degree in which they display them. They maintain the traditional division of labour between men and women. The men plough the fields and repair their houses; they cut the trees of the forest and cart timber to the railway station. As the long lines of bullock carts enveloped in a cloud of red dust bump over the country roads, one finds here and there in the line a Christian man urging on his pair of bullocks. In bad years when a crowd of men are thronging round the office of the local police station to receive their cultivation loans from the government the Christians take their turn with the rest. The women do the work of the house and take the customary share in the cultivation of the fields and in the food-gathering activities of the village women. The men play their part in the annual hunts and the heads of the household sit with the rest of the villagers in the councils of the village and the tribe.

In spite of the common interests and activities which bind the villagers together irrespective of religious allegiance, the Santal Christian is immediately aware of certain tensions which issue progressively in a breaking away from the old way of life.

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794 779 • 177 178 [152] The most important cause of tension is the acceptance of a theology—a new myth, as it may be called—that results in a new ordering of religious activities and social obligations. The shadowy figure of the Supreme Being is invested with personality and comes into the centre of consciousness. He is not merely the Creator to whom little is ascribed except a vague reference as the dispenser of good and bad weather; He is vitally concerned with human conduct. The stories of Genesis are grafted on to conceptions that are already held and affect the latter. The story of the Jews is appreciated as that of a people who suffered through a long history from oppression, and the story of the wanderings appeals to the Santal. It is altogether fitting that the One Saviour of all mankind should be born of a people with whom the Santal feels that he has much in common. The traditional story of the origin of mankind is held to supplement the biblical narrative. In preaching, the Santal constantly refers to Adam and Eve as *Pilcu Haṛam* and *Pilcu Budhi*; *Maraṅ Buru*, on the other hand, is equated with Satan, and the cult of worship that he instituted is regarded as a deception imposed on the Santals. To the Santal who has been led in any degree to appreciate the Christian teaching about God, the identification of *Maraṅ Buru* with Satan seems to be obvious. He led the first human pair into sin and revealed to them the secret of sexual intercourse, for which the polite name among the Santals is always *baṛic' kami*, or evil work. He caused their ancestors to wander through the forests and finally foisted on them the cult of the spirits centring in the worship of himself. It follows that there are certain things which a Christian may not do. They are cut off from any activity that savours of worship of the tribal spirits. They do not contribute in cash or in kind to the offerings associated with the village festivals. This in turn excludes them from the communal rejoicing, the dancing and the feasting which take place during the festivals. At such times they are frequently the only sober persons in the village. It is impossible to live in a village at the time of the great Spring and Harvest festivals without becoming acutely aware of the gulf which divides the Christians from their neighbours, and without realizing that the Christians are themselves deeply conscious of the gulf. The same is true of the clan sacrifices; but it is interesting to observe that rules of behaviour which are linked with the mythology of the clans still regulate the conduct of the village Christian to a very large extent. A Murmu who has a clan taboo against building a house with four sloping sides to the roof continues to live in the style of house

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enjoined by custom. Food taboos and those relating to dress and ornament are respected and the rules governing clan exogamy are accepted without question. The reason underlying these facts is probably that even when the myth has been discredited the code of behaviour is charged with emotions that continue to enforce it as long as the village environment has been little affected.

In their attitude to the ancestor cult many of the Christians have evolved a compromise. Some families known to me started their Christian life on the basis of a bargain with the spirits. In one village in particular where there are now eight Christian households in a community of twenty-eight families, at least three of the original families to be converted left one of the brothers outside the Church. The unbaptized members of these families were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the fellowship of the family with their ancestors. As one of those concerned said: "If the offerings had not been continued, then the ancestors might have shown their displeasure at all the children becoming Christian." Others who have become Christians continue to make offerings. In no case have I ever been able to discover evidence that Christians make any animal offerings, but during the festival which takes place at the end of the month of *Pus* many Christians make the cakes that are traditionally associated with the festival and make offerings of them to their immediate forbears. The family, represented by the living and the dead, continues to be a focus of powerful sentiments, and the Christians are evidently aware of a void in the teaching that they have received in regard to it.

The identification of *Maran Buru* with Satan incidentally provides a mythological foundation for propaganda in favour of total abstinence, for it was he who taught the first parents to brew beer. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which such propaganda has had the desired effect among the Christian community. Some of its members are known and respected as total abstainers, a fact that illustrates the introduction of a changed standard of values. On the other hand, the majority of village Christians certainly drink beer. The attitude of the community towards the older people who indulge is tolerant, and the habit is explained largely by the fact that the provision of beer is important in showing hospitality towards visitors. Drunkenness, however, is not condoned and it is certainly no longer a form of communal rejoicing. Drinking to excess, where it occurs, has become a private habit surrounded with secrecy.

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794 The second main factor in producing tension is that the
177 Christian becomes a member of a community that is different
178 from the tribal community into which he was born and different
158 from any other within his experience. He may know of one or two Santals who have been influenced by the Bengal form of Vaishnavism and have adopted some strange customs in consequence, and he is familiar with the semi-secret society formed by the *ojha* and his disciples, but neither of these provides any analogy with the society of which he now becomes a member.
794 The preaching of the Christian Faith has been pioneered by
797 European missionaries, and up to the present the direction of the
177 affairs of the Christian Church has remained in the hands of
178 missionaries to a greater extent than in many other parts of
152 India. Their apparent superiority tends to make the village Christian belittle his own ideas and institutions. Their superior wealth and beneficence tempt him to rely on their help, and sometimes produce resentment when the help is withheld for a reason which he is quite unable to appreciate, the desire to make him "independent". Furthermore, Santal Christians are linked
794 through the Church with Christians who come from other com-
177 munities. This fusion of diverse elements produces strain at
178 times. There has been no difficulty from the first in taking common meals, and this has safeguarded the witness of the
[264] Sacrament of Holy Communion to the unity of believers in Christ. On the other hand, many Christians shrink from contact with the corpse of a non-Santal Christian. Near the village of Samadi there used to be one household of Christians who were of Bhuiya stock. I was on tour in the area when the
[264] old grandmother died. She was buried in the Christian burial ground, here, as in most villages, a piece of waste-land within the holding of one of the Santal Christians, but none of the local Santal Christians would touch the corpse. The persistence of such ideas varies, one might say, in inverse proportion to the degree of contact which the local community enjoys with other Christians. Samadi is in a far corner of the area and such an incident would not occur nearer to the centre. This can be further illustrated by the fusion that has been
794 gradually taking place in the Christian community through
177 intermarriage. Although the village Christian abhors the thought
178 of intermarriage, a few individuals have ignored the rule of tribal endogamy and have contracted marriages against which there
582 are no Christian sanctions. Those who have done so would not find it possible to continue to live in the village community, and

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they are usually men and women who are already divorced from village life. A Santal who has been educated to University standard and subsequently obtained government employment has already been almost completely detribalized. He has little contact with his kinsfolk after early childhood, and if he chooses to marry a non-Santal wife he is strong enough to ignore the sentiment of other Santals. He has to suffer the knowledge that the majority of the Santal Christians as well as the non-Christians are extremely critical of his action and no longer regard him as one of themselves. It also happens sometimes that boys and girls who have been away from home in the mission boarding schools either persuade their reluctant guardians to agree to mixed marriages or force the issue on the community by their own action. The opposition aroused by such marriages usually abates with the passage of time.

While it is convenient to regard education as the third of the factors producing tension in the life of the Christian community, it is in some senses the key to all the rest. To some extent it has been responsible for strains felt through the whole range of tribal life, and this will become increasingly evident in the future with the spread of education. The problems created in the life of the Christian community are the more acute because its members have been eager to grasp at the advantages that accrue from education. Boys and girls in Christian families are sent to the local village school without any question. Immediately they are brought in touch with a new world. In accordance with government regulations they begin to learn to read and write Bengali. Attempts that have been made to give to Santali a more prominent place in the curriculum are not popular, for it has no commercial value. After completing the course at the village school the majority of the children pass into the life of boarding schools at Sarenga, where they remain for an average period of four years. The majority of the teachers at these schools now are themselves Santals and products of the same community, but the type of life is far removed from that of the village, and Santal culture is at best an "extra". The main emphasis of the schooling, accepted by teachers, parents and boys alike, is that the latter should be fitted for higher education or industrial training. Two-thirds of the pupils are Santals, but their language is banished from the classrooms except for about two periods in the week. Prayers are conducted in Santali alternately with Bengali. Although they are encouraged to learn and practise

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794 their tribal dances, the activity takes on a self-conscious quality
177 which is quite unable to stand up to the general assumption of
178 the Bengali community that these dances are fit only for the
871 uneducated and "simple" villager. The education of girls follows a somewhat different pattern. For many years the
794 Christians were slow in taking advantage of facilities for girls'
177 education and the numbers in the girls' school were comparatively small. To a former generation girls were destined to the
178 life of village housewives, and the education provided was not
871 only irrelevant but it positively endangered the success of their
562 daughters in marriage. Many of the older generation and some of the younger express a preference for illiterate wives who need less clothes and become proficient in house and field work by living at home. In school the girls live a sheltered life. Although agricultural training is given both to boys and girls in school through the care of gardens and through work on the rice fields belonging to the mission, such activity is regarded as an extra and some parents have voiced the view that it is a form of exploitation! In recent years, however, a change has come over the general attitude towards girls' education owing to the growth of a small number of economically independent unmarried women whose earnings are valuable to their families and also to the rise of a demand for educated wives by a section of the men. The changing attitude was illustrated by the fact that when in 1937, as a result of a change in policy, the girls were housed in cottages constructed as nearly as possible on the lines of a Santal village, there was considerable opposition from the parents. They objected that the girls would have too much housework in addition to their studies.

794 A new class of Santal Christians has been created which sets
177 the tone for changes in the community. The more intellectual
178 members are lost to village life; they pass to High School or to other training and many of them retain only slender links with
871 their village homes. They follow a wide range of occupations
571 unknown to Santals of the older generation, in government
464 service, as paid mission agents, and in recent years they have begun to enter the ranks of industrial workers in the city. Girls have become nurses and teachers. The local leaders of the Church are largely salaried members of the mission staff who are "compound" centred rather than village minded. Their small but regular wages have made them better off than the great majority of the peasants among whom they work; and one result is that the latter do not invariably follow the lead they are given.

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THE NEW COMMUNITY

From time to time the local Church courts have to consider matters of discipline for moral offences. The only kind of "sanction" that is effective in such cases is a social and economic boycott of the offender by other members of the community. This type of boycott is familiar enough in village life, and the leaders in the Church courts do at times seek to impose it. They are frequently discouraged by the fact that the Christian villager declines to obey the resolution of the meeting in which he doubtless feels he should have a greater voice. The comparative impotence of the Christian community to deal with offenders does encourage moral laxity in certain individuals. The further inference that some offences are more common in one section of the community than in another, or among Christians than among non-Christians, does not follow. When village Christians are themselves faced with the necessity of taking disciplinary action they fall back on tribal practice as nearly as possible. On one occasion a Santal Christian man died at his home about seven miles from Sarenga and the local "catechist" came to ask me to conduct the funeral. This request was unusual, for in the normal way he would have conducted the funeral himself. The dead man, however, had left his home fourteen years before and had lived in the "east" with a non-Christian woman, for which reason his name had been struck off the rolls; so far as the local Christian community was concerned, they understood by this that he was to be to them "as a heathen and a publican". Shortly before he died, knowing himself to be seriously ill, he had desired to return to the scenes of his childhood and he had come back to the home of his aged and widowed mother. The dilemma faced by the local Christians when he died was a very real one. No one else would dispose of the body; but if they did so, how was it consistent with the fact that the man had been thrust out of the community? Unwilling to face the alternatives, they wished me to do so. My advice to the catechist was that he was to carry out the wishes of the majority of the members of the church in the place. Later I learnt that they had decided to make the widowed mother pay a fine of five rupees, a considerable sum for her, and in return they agreed to bury the corpse without holding any prayers over the grave. Half the money was paid to those who dug the grave, and the balance was deposited in the "poor fund" of the local church.

The danger of a cleavage between the leadership and the rank and file can be seen also in the attitude of many of the former to their own language and culture. They have benefited materially

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from their aptitude at school in mastering the subject matter of their Bengali education and they are all too conscious of the early handicaps arising from bilingualism. They entertain a very natural ambition to give their children a better chance than they themselves have enjoyed, and so a number of them have banished the use of Santali from their homes. This is done not only to give their children a start in school, but also because they feel that if their children learn Santali first they will speak Bengali with a Santal, and therefore an uncultured, accent, on account of which they themselves have experienced the shafts of derision. In any case it is probable that owing to their education they find the Bengali language more adequate for the expression of many of their own needs. They are therefore predisposed to turn their backs on Santal culture and adopt modes of behaviour that are alien to the Santal village. The moral standards of individualism and those of a society where the individual counts for little have clashed in their lives and have not yet resulted in an equilibrium.

Nevertheless, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the Christian Church is making some contributions of real significance to the whole community through the new educated leadership which is also responsible for elements of real value in the life of the Christian Church itself. Among the leaders, as also among the rank and file, there is much genuine religious experience and sincere piety that issue in unselfish service to the village as a whole and to the Christian Church in particular. Chumeram Hembrom, a pensioner of the mission, wrote: "Now because of my age they have pensioned me on seven rupees a month. However, God and Jesus the Saviour of men have not deserted me. The spirit of my mind is cool (i.e., it is at peace). I believe that if we unite body and mind in prayer and ask anything in the name of Jesus it will be granted to us. All of us pray to Jesus Christ. Although my wife can neither read nor write, she prays with knowledge every evening and we are content. By our deeds and by our words we bring pain to God, but through Jesus we ask for forgiveness."[1] Many members of the second generation of Christians are active in a hundred local situations, serving their fellows. Some are revered by many generations of school children and are themselves proud of those whom they have helped to go farther on the road of learning than they themselves have travelled. In time of famine and sickness they spend themselves on behalf of their fellows and are trusted by all.

Corporate life in the Christian community finds expression in

[1] From a manuscript in my possession.

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794 this occasion they make use of *sarpa*, and the Christmas songs
796 that they sing are set to *Sohrae* tunes, as Christmas falls into the harvest season. During the afternoon of Christmas Day sports are held. These attract large numbers of spectators, and the final item in the sports, an archery contest, has become established as one of the events of the countryside. The interest and enthusiasm of spectators and competitors, who gather year after year to display their skill, is out of all proportion to the value of the prize that is offered. When the sports end the people disperse, the Christians to feast in their own homes.

Good Friday is observed with great solemnity, and the majority of the adults fast until after they have attended church. The services are very well attended, and on the initiative of the people themselves new forms of celebration are frequently being introduced. In most of the local churches the three-hour service has established itself in the customs of the people. On Good Friday in 1946 at the village of Barikul the people decided to follow the service by a silent procession through the village street. They filed behind a "standard bearer" who carried a rude cross fashioned from two *sarjom* saplings. At Easter it is customary for the dawn to be greeted by bands of young men singing in the village and also at the local Christian burial ground. The day is also characterized by large and enthusiastic gatherings of worshippers. Little has been done in this area to "baptize" the magico-religious practices connected with agriculture, and although Harvest Festivals are celebrated by the bringing of thank-offerings to church and the decoration of the church buildings, they have not become times of community rejoicing and remembrance as have the historic occasions associated with the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Saviour.

794 In the customs that surround life's crises one sees the blending
• 177 of old and new concepts and symbols. Pregnancy taboos are
178 widely observed, and steps have to be taken by Christians to
[843] remove the uncleanness resulting from birth. The practice of
844 "churching" women was not introduced to the people at the
[783] beginning and it has never been put in the forefront, but the Christians carry out the bathing and naming and the feasting of neighbours. In this they are joined in many cases by non-Christian villagers, though no two Christian occasions are alike in
[184] this respect. In some places most of the villagers gather, in other places all the women come, while at other villages only Christians collect. Something depends on the strength and persistence

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of ties that have been maintained with kinsfolk and something on the general regard for the individuals concerned. The same variety is found in the degree to which precautions against *bhut* and other unseen adversaries are observed, but a new element has been introduced in the prayer offered on the occasion by the local leader of the church. Infant Baptism follows usually during some part of the first year of the child's life. Very young children are withheld from Baptism as a rule, and this may be partly due to a feeling that the ceremony is in some way dangerous to the new-born infant. Among some people it is sought in connection with the time when the child first begins to eat rice; among others it is customary for them to offer their children in Baptism on Christmas Day. When the child is taken to church to be baptized both the parents and the child are dressed in new clothes and relatives and neighbours are invited to a feast in the home of the child.

Many pre-Christian elements remain in the preparations made for marriage. The choice of marriage partners is still largely in the hands of the parents of the bridegroom and the bride. The services of a go-between are engaged and ceremonial visits take place during the course of which the bride price is negotiated and paid. During the early years of the mission the custom of bride price was actively discouraged, but a fuller understanding of its importance has led to a tacit acceptance by the authorities; in the meanwhile it is now often referred to by Christians under the name of "mutual help". The rise of economic standards in the Christian community is reflected in a tendency among parents of Christian girls to demand a bride price higher than the rate current in the non-Christian community. From time to time Christians have met to discuss means by which the bride price may be fixed and excessive demands restricted. On the eve of the religious ceremony which is central in Christian marriage the traditional anointing is observed in the homes of both parties to the marriage and many of the traditional songs are sung. A Christian explained these ceremonies by saying that they are regarded as a way of saying to the bride and bridegroom: "From now you are separate." It cannot be denied that they are an effective way of emphasizing this truth.

The marriage ceremony, which has to be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Christian Marriage Act, is held either in a church building or, where there is no church, in the courtyard of the bride's home. The last occasion on which I was present at a Santal Christian marriage was in February 1945.

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The service took place in the church at Barikul; the month is significant, for Christians observe the same times and seasons as others. The bride, whose home was in the village, had been away to boarding school and was sixteen years old. For her wedding she was dressed in a red *sari*, and her head and face were covered by one end of the garment. The bridegroom was a village schoolmaster whose home was in a village some eight miles distant. He too was dressed in "respectable", i.e. Bengali, fashion, with a silk cloth thrown over his right shoulder. Many non-Christian women and girls crowded into the church with the Christians to watch, though non-Christian men stayed outside and peered through the windows. The service is according to the Order in the Book of Common Prayer, and the bridegroom presents the bride with a ring. The fact that the bride was holding in her left hand an iron *janti*, or betel nut cracker, led to somewhat complicated shufflings when the ring was being placed in position. The mutual vows involve the repetition of the personal names of the bride by the bridegroom, and *vice versa*, a definite departure from tribal custom. When the Benediction had been pronounced a maternal aunt of the bride tied one end of the latter's *sari* to the end of the bridegroom's silk cloth, and this was followed by the signing of the register, an act that is always regarded with great interest by the non-Christians who observe it. While the register was being signed the men and women in the church sang alternate verses of a marriage song. Before the main party had left the building the rest of the congregation went out and the door was locked. No one else was allowed to leave the building until the bridegroom had promised to pay a fee to the old women whose duty it was to sweep the church, a building of mud walls with a thatched roof that was used also as a day school. The bride, the bridegroom and the officiating minister were garlanded.

At the bride's home after the ceremony we saw some of the mock garlands which the *lumti*, or bridesmaids, had made for the bridegroom and his father. They were of plaited coco-nut fibre decorated with tamarind fruits and pieces of the hard outer shell of the *sinjo* fruit. The groom and bride arrived back at the home still tied together; they were being led by the wife of the local "catechist", who held the bridegroom's right hand in her left, and the small procession was completed by an unmarried girl walking close behind the couple, holding an umbrella over their heads. The knot in their clothing was now untied and they were both carried into the house on the hip of a stalwart married woman to partake of their first meal together, the only time

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when they would sit and eat together. The feast took some time to prepare; the bride's relations—her parents were dead and she was married from the home of a paternal aunt, a blind widow—had provided a goat, but as they were in poor circumstances the Christian villagers had contributed the rice from their homes. While the guests waited for the food there was a good deal of singing, the songs being both traditional and Christian. Here are some examples noted at the time:

Two bows and six arrow shafts I kept in store.
The arrowheads have been sent ahead to *Radha*;[1]
The money also has been sent ahead to *Radha*.[2]

You who should have come yesterday at noon,
Why, sons, did you arrive in the evening?

Three headmen from three villages
Wrangled over the marriage booth;
They did not want to let go the vermilion giving.[3]

The daughter bids farewell and goes;
The house is forlorn, father, the house is forlorn.
The rice in the straw bundle has been pushed out;
Its wooden platform is forlorn, father, its wooden platform is forlorn.[4]

The following song struck a Christian note:

My life (Jesus) and your life,
Two lives (Jesus) are bound together;
Like the *alak* creeper and the *bandi*[5] creeper,
Like the spider web in the palmyra tree,
Two lives (Jesus) are bound together.[6]

On this occasion I was unable to remain to witness the final farewell and homegoing, but these follow closely the traditional Santal way.

In the death ceremonies there is little trace of pre-Christian modes of thought. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Christian teaching not only gives a new significance to the individual but also has something definite to say about the destiny of the human soul after death. The difference is emphasized for

[1] The name of the bridegroom's village.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 32.
[3] Two forest creepers.
[4] See Appendix B, No. 31.
[5] See Appendix B, No. 33.
[6] See Appendix B, No. 34.

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the Santal Christian by the fact that the Christian custom—so far as he is aware—is burial. When a death has occurred the interment follows as soon as possible, but not before the corpse has been anointed with oil and turmeric. For this service the Christians are dependent upon each other; non-Christians keep themselves strictly away from the house of death. The grave is always dug lengthwise from east to west and the head of the corpse is placed towards the west. Whenever possible the body is draped in a new cloth, but in any case the clothes worn at the time of death are also buried. Coffins are a sign of affluence; usually the body is laid on a bed of leaves at the bottom of the grave and covered gently with leaves and sticks before the earth is filled in. Small treasures are laid in the grave, personal possessions of the deceased; and it is not uncommon to bury a New Testament or a Bible with the body. The subsequent mourning and funeral ceremonies of the non-Christian are altogether absent; in their place we find that on the day after the funeral, which is also usually the day after the death has taken place, the Christians gather at the bereaved home, where they sing and pray together and hear the Scriptures read. The dead person is praised and the living are comforted; and no passages are more used at these occasions than the familiar words of the Twenty-third Psalm and the Fourteenth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. They share the Christian hope and in expressing it they are giving a new content to the word *rąskę* that is so often on the lips of the Santal, for they speak of *jaejug rąskę*, eternal joy.